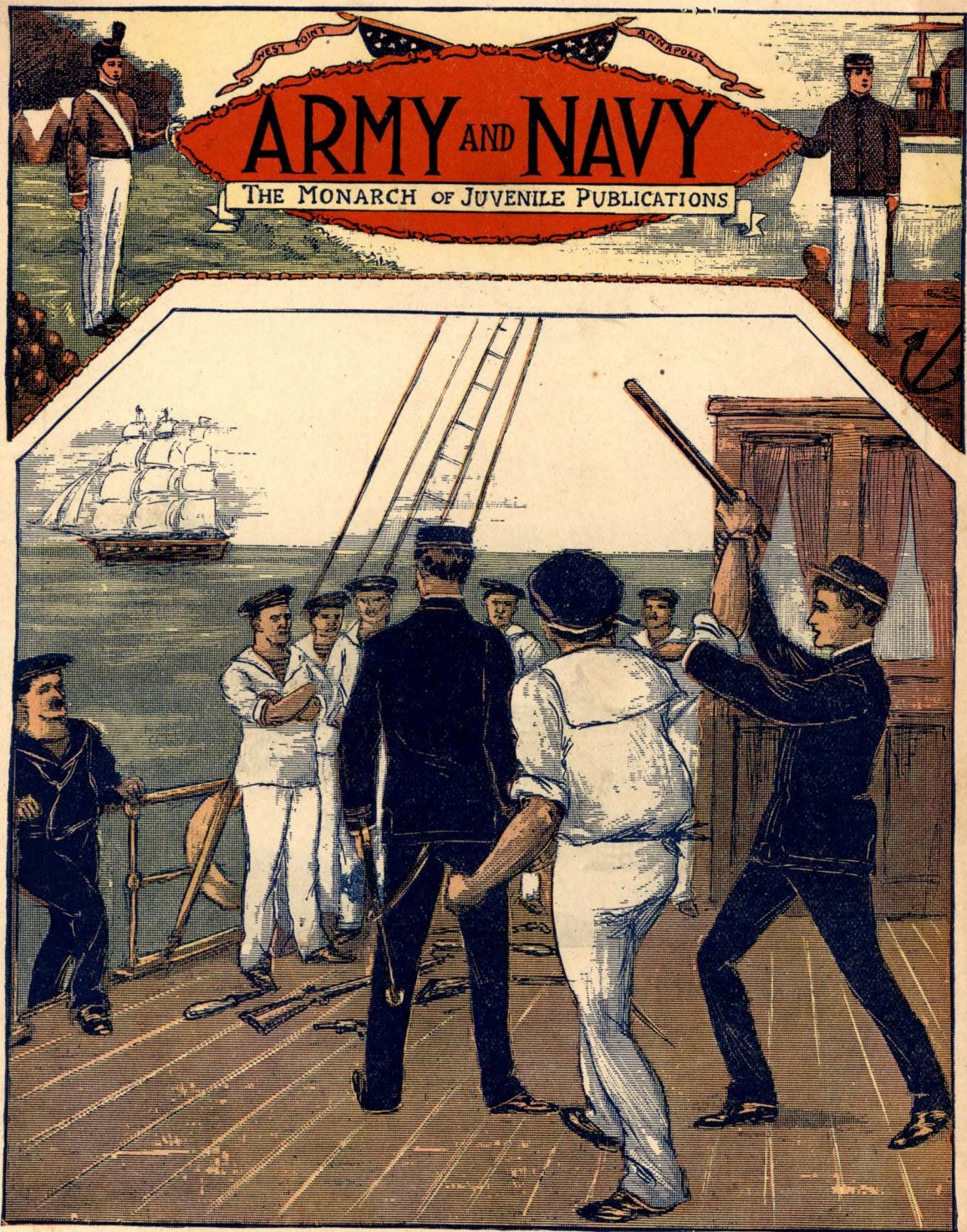


Nº 31

Cadet School Stories

5 CENTS



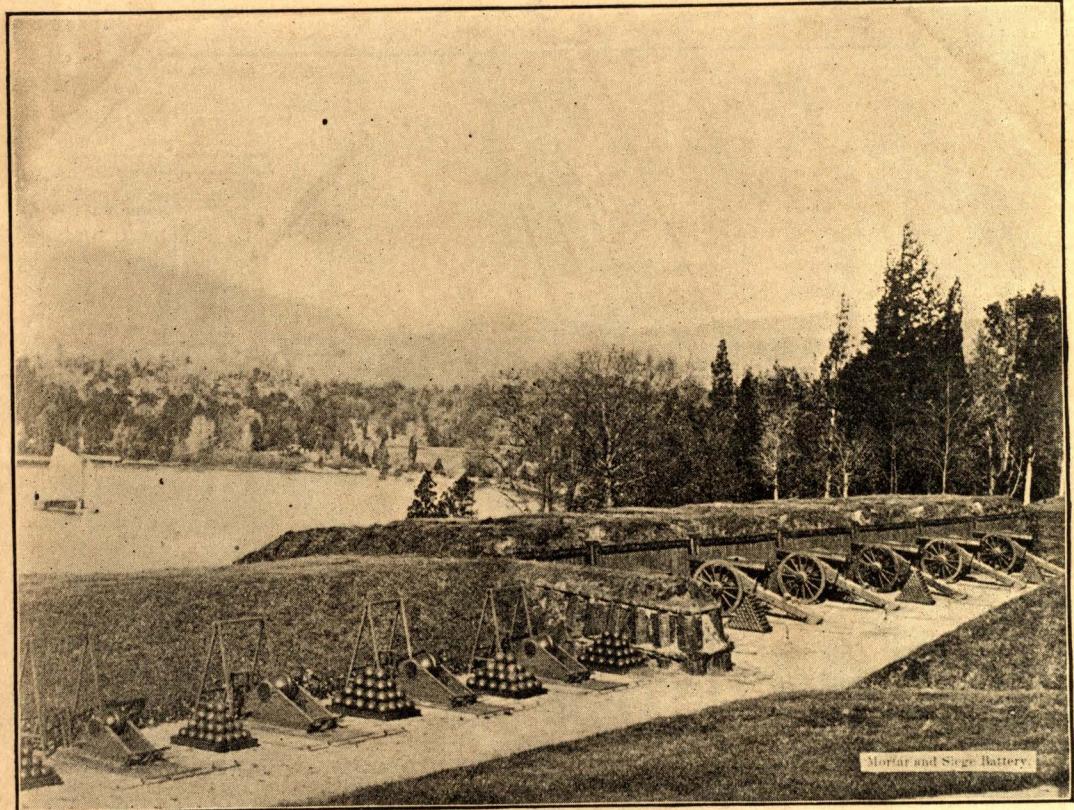
Clif grasped the mutineer's arm as he raised the iron bar.

(“Clif Faraday’s Wit; or, The Chase of the Yacht Fleetwing.” Complete in this number.)

Vol. 1
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ARMY AND NAVY.

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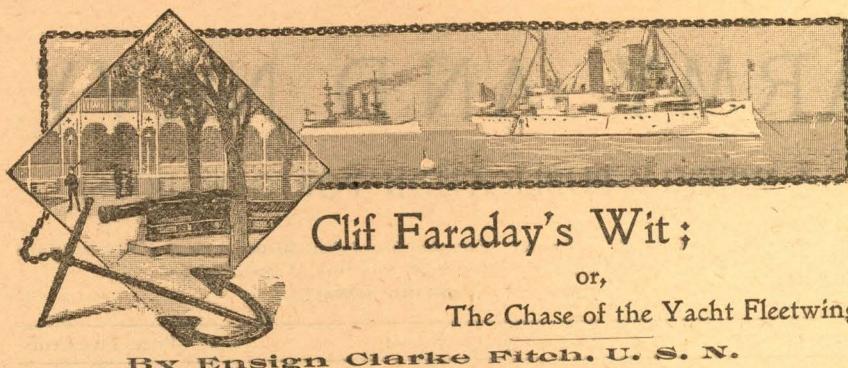
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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

NUMBER thirty-four, out February fifth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight will be a banner issue. New features, new changes and a splendid new contest, will be inaugurated. No. 34 will be a great surprise to our readers. Look out for it.



Clif Faraday's Wit;

or,

The Chase of the Yacht Fleetwing.

By Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N.

CHAPTER I.

THE CEREMONY OF QUARTERS.

"There goes first call to quarters, fellows."

"Gee whiz! is it that late?"

"Hi, there, Trolley, what did you do with my mustering shirt?"

"What you think, Nanny Gote? I no got it. He! he! it no fit my little toe. You leave him out of locker yesterday and now him in lucky bag."

A burst of laughter followed as a little lad darted across the deck toward the master-at-arms' corner.

The naval cadets—that is the watch below—of the practice ship Monongahela were preparing for morning quarters. The first call had already sounded, and, as a matter of course, there was much hurrying and bustling to get in trim before the final summons.

The "lucky bag" to which Trolley had referred is a time-honored institution on men-of-war. Boys and even men will be careless in allowing their clothing and other property to lie about, and it is necessary to resort to firm measures to keep the decks in order.

The master-at-arms—the chief of police on board naval vessels—is given authority to confiscate any article he finds out of place. In former days he would stow them away in a huge bag which was dubbed by sarcastic sailors the "lucky bag," but in the modern ships there is a properly arranged locker. The old name still clings to it, however.

When a sailor makes the melancholy discovery that his coat or shoes or cap has found its way to the lucky bag he

has recourse to one of two remedies. He can boldly apply to the master-at-arms and claim the article, which means a report and punishment, or he can wait until the end of the month and bid in the lost article at the regular auction sale.

It was this dilemma which confronted poor Nanny. He had left his best shirt outside the locker the previous day, and now it was imperatively needed for morning quarters.

He rejoined the laughing group after a time with the shirt and a long face.

"That means ten demerits and a bad name with the first luff, Nanny," sighed Joy. "Why can't you take care of your things? Don't you know the master-at-arms has enough to do in his official capacity without playing nurse for all the kids on board?"

"You needn't talk, Dismal Joy," retorted the little cadet. "You are not so many even if your head is shaped like a state-house dome. You don't know your own name half the time. Didn't he have to think twice the other day when the pay clerk read the list at general muster, Clif?"

The cadet he appealed to—a stalwart, handsome lad with crisp curly brown hair—laughed.

"It wasn't that, youngster. He fell asleep in line, and Grat Wallace had to whisper 'dinner' in his ear before he woke up."

The brazen notes of a bugle sounding the assembly floated down the open hatchway. The half-dozen cadets on the berth deck made a simultaneous rush for the ladder.

Clif Faraday was in the lead, and poor

Nanny, still struggling with his shirt, brought up the rear.

After much tugging and pulling the tardy group reached the upper deck and scampered to their respective stations in the gun's crows assembled for quarters and inspection.

It was rather an inspiring scene this on board the gallant old Monongahela on the day in question. The weather was fine, and a warm sun shone from a sky of sparkling azure.

Aloft the practice ship was one pyramid of snowy canvas. Every sail that could draw was stretched to a favoring breeze, and the tapering masts creaked and swayed under the stupendous strain.

Along the trim white spar deck were grouped the various crews at their guns. A sturdy set of boys they were on the starboard side. Clean-limbed lads, with bright, intelligent faces. Not one among them but looked both healthy and happy.

In charge of each division was a regular naval officer, and under him cadets did duty in lower grades. Aft on the quarter deck stood the commander of the ship, keeping a quiet but watchful gaze over all.

In possession of the bridge was the executive officer, and to him came with respectful salutation the various division officers each reporting in crisp, terse language that spoke of authority, the condition of their crews.

"First division present and accounted for," one would say with cap in hand.

"Very well, sir," called back the executive officer with an answering salute.

One after another the reports came until at last, when all were heard from, the executive officer wheeled toward the captain, and with a touch of his cap, said clearly:

"All present or accounted for, sir."

"Very well, sir; beat the retreat," was the brief reply.

And quarters were over for that day.

"What a great thing routine is," said Clif, as he and Joy strolled forward from their gun. "Here we have been going through that same old ceremony since we left Annapolis last June, and it never grows tiresome. Always something to add interest."

"Judson Greene made a fool of him-

self, as usual," replied the lanky plebe.

"What happened? I didn't see it."

"He tripped over one of the gun blocks and dropped his cap. A package of cigarettes fell out almost at Lieutenant Cole's feet."

"Gorry! what did he say?"

"Put Greene down for report. He'll get enough demerits to sink him if he keeps on."

"Serves him right for smoking them. I saw him go into a cigar store day before yesterday in New London. I knew he was after the sticks."

"Hi, Clif!" called out a voice behind them, and little Nanny came trotting up.

"What is it, youngster?" queried Fara-day, kindly.

He had rather a liking for the little fellow—Nanny was the smallest cadet on board, and barely within the limit of size.

"You promised me a game of chess this morning. Haven't we got time now?"

"Not on your commission," spoke up Joy. "Cutlass drill is at ten; then we'll have a few rounds with one of the cadet corporals at navigation, and then it'll be time for dinner. Better wait until your second time on earth, kid."

"If I thought I would meet you again I'd never come back," grinned Nanny. "One life with you is ample. Say, let's go on the topgallant forecastle and enjoy the breezes. It'll be twenty minutes before drill."

The three cadets made their way along the teeming deck to the bow of the ship. Clif found a comfortable seat upon a chest, and glanced admiringly over the beautiful expanse of foam-capped waters.

The ocean was one stretch of tossing, tumbling waves extending as far as the eye could reach to the distant horizon.

The sea was clear except for the Monongahela, but a faint white spot gleamed in the sun's rays just where water met sky in the direction the practice ship was steering.

It might be a gull, or a bit of floating debris, or a tiny cloud, and it attracted no attention, but as it came to pass, that minute spot was destined to furnish one of the most exciting incidents of the Monongahela's summer cruise.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS YACHT.

"For goodness' sake, here's comes Trolley, and he's singing!" exclaimed Nanny, glancing aft.

A strange noise came to the ears of the three cadets. It was not a chant nor a song, but seemed to be a little of both.

Clif and Joy followed Nanny's example. Sauntering toward them was the Japanese cadet placidly intoning what at first seemed to be a specimen of native music.

"By Jake! listen to that," sighed Joy. "He's actually trying an American song. For goodness' sake, listen!"

"Lifes on the ocean wave

A houses on the rolling deep,
Where the scattered waters rave,
And the winds——"

"Oh, shut up!" interrupted Nanny, in disgust. "You're committing murder."

"You no like that sing," replied Trolley, imperturbably. "I give you another. How this?"

"White wings never grow tired——"

Biff!

A wet swab came from the other side of the deck, striking the would-be minstrel on the neck. This was the signal for a regular bombardment, and Trolley was compelled to seek shelter behind the foremast.

"White wings never grow tired," laughed Clif. "Did you ever hear the beat of that? Ha! ha! that Jap and his broken English will kill me yet."

"He will get killed himself if he tries it again," replied Joy, with as near an approach to a grin as he could muster. "He takes his life in his hands when ——"

"Sail O!"

The hail sounded from the foretop far above the boys' heads. An answering call came from the officer of the deck aft:

"Where away?"

"Dead ahead, sir."

"Can you make it out?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Report when you can."

This conversation carried on in stentorian tones attracted the attention of all on deck. Since leaving New London en route to Annapolis two days previous, the

Monongahela had encountered very few vessels.

This was probably caused by the course which had been well laid well off shore. At sea, even to the experienced sailor, the sighting of a vessel is an event worthy of notice. To the naval cadets on board the practice ship, it promised a slight break in the monotony of the cruise.

Every person on deck not on duty took occasion to stroll forward and eye the white spot now plainly visible on the horizon.

Many conjectures were made as to the class, nationality and destination of the stranger, then the subject dropped, and something else took its place.

"It's probably a coaster," remarked Clif, indifferently.

"Or a Cuban filibuster bound for the West Indies," suggested Joy.

The call to drill put an end to the discussion, and it was fully an hour before the sail was recalled to mind by another hail from the foretop.

"On deck!" came the hoarse call.

The officer of the watch paused in his ceaseless pacing of the bridge, and glanced upward inquiringly.

"Well?" he asked.

"I can make out the sail, sir."

"What is it?"

"A schooner-rigged yacht steering sou' by west, sir."

"Any flag?"

"No, sir."

The executive officer, attracted by the hail, mounted to the bridge with his spy-glass. He focused it upon the distant object, which was now hull up above the horizon, and made a long and careful scrutiny.

After a while he turned to the deck officer with a puzzled expression upon his face. Clif, who was standing near, engaged with some work, heard him say:

"They are not very seaman-like aboard there, Wallace. The sails are hoisted haphazard, and the whole upper rigging is not as trim as one would expect on a pleasure craft."

"Probably they caught that gale yesterday," suggested the lieutenant.

"Perhaps. But they have had ample time to spruce up. She's a beautiful

model, and there's enough brasswork aboard to sheathe this hull."

Both officers used their glasses, and Clif dallied with his work to learn more. He could see that something was amiss, and his curiosity was naturally aroused. It takes very little to excite interest at sea.

"On deck," suddenly hailed the lookout at the masthead. "The yacht is preparing to tack."

"He is right," muttered the first lieutenant; "they are coming up to the wind. Ah! they missed stays. What a set of lubbers!"

"They seem to be short-handed," replied his companion. "I see only a few men on deck, and none of them are dressed like officers."

"Mr. Faraday," exclaimed the first lieutenant, turning to the cadet, "ask Captain Brookes if he will kindly step to the bridge."

Clif was away in a flash. As he hurried aft he met Nanny. The little lad asked inquiringly:

"What's up, chum? The first luff looks excited."

"He has reason to be," replied Faraday, as he shot past. "That's a rakish pirate clipper over there, and we are going to capture her."

Nanny stared after him in open-mouthed wonder, then he slowly shook his head and went forward. Even his faith in his idol could not make him swallow that yarn.

Clif returned to the bridge after notifying the captain. When the latter joined the two officers the schooner-yacht had succeeded in making the tack.

As the courses stood now the Monongahela was steering in a direction which would take her far astern of the other.

A few brief words of explanation placed Captain Brookes in possession of the facts in the case. Before vouchsafing an opinion he carefully inspected the yacht through his glass, a powerful instrument.

"Well," he said at last, "I think they are acting peculiarly aboard of her to say the least."

"Just what I think," promptly agreed the first lieutenant.

Clif pricked up his ears and crept nearer. Several other cadets, among them Joy

and Nanny, found an excuse to ascend to the bridge. The spectacle of three officers, and one of them the captain, taking so much interest in a passing sail, was of sufficient importance to attract attention.

The commander took another glance, then he said briefly:

"Show our number, Mr. Watson."

A few moments later a string of bunting was flying from the main truck. Eager eyes watched the yacht. Would she follow the example, and display the usual signal, or would those on board ignore common nautical courtesy.

"By Jove! it doesn't look as if she intends to notice us," muttered the first lieutenant.

"I can see the crew looking this way," put in the officer of the deck. "They can't miss our signal."

"Alter the course, Mr. Watson," suddenly exclaimed the captain, closing his teeth with a snap. "Steer directly for the yacht."

With that he fell to pacing up and down the bridge. It was evident he felt annoyed.

"By Jake! I hope she turns out to be a blooming pirate," said Joy. "I'd like to see a little—what's the matter with you?"

This last was addressed to Clif, who had commenced to chuckle hilariously.

"Joy, you are an unmitigated fraud," replied Faraday. "Here you have been preaching peace and good will toward men and deplored the need of war and all that, and now—"

"Oh, don't talk to him," put in Nanny, in disgust. "Last night he was lecturing Grat Wallace on the beauties of arbitration in settling all differences between nations and also between individuals, and five minutes later he licked the stuffing out of 'Buster' Wells because he bumped up against him in turning into his hammock."

Joy grinned and winked placidly.

"You fellows are not capable of understanding the workings of a really great intellect," he retorted. "You know my motto has been peace at any price even if you have to use a club."

"Look!" suddenly exclaimed Clif, pointing toward the yacht. "They are

going about again. They are trying to run away from us as sure as guns!"

CHAPTER III.

"I'LL SINK YOU DEEPER THAN DAVY JONES' LOCKER!"

It was evident Clif's opinion was shared by Captain Brookes and the other officers on the Monongahela's bridge.

The former energetically used his glass for a moment, then he exclaimed with some heat:

"This beats my comprehension. They are either crazy on board that craft or else they have something to hide. Gentlemen, it is our duty to investigate this matter. Mr. Watson, lower our number, fire a blank charge to leeward, and hoist the number again. We'll see if that will bring a response."

The excitement now manifested on the practice ship was probably greater than the occasion warranted. At sea, however, and on a naval vessel, the slightest indication of trouble is eagerly noticed and generally welcomed.

The news that a gun was to be fired as a warning to the stranger spread rapidly, and all hands found it expedient to rush on deck. There was no delay in carrying out the commander's orders.

The forward gun on the starboard side was loaded with a blank charge, the signal lowered, then as it fluttered aloft again, the deep boom of the report echoed across the water.

"That will tell them that we are not to be fooled with," said Captain Brookes, grimly.

"They are not making any preparations to obey," said Mr. Watson, using his glass. "I can see them rushing about the deck trimming sails, but there is no one at the signal halliards."

"Change the course and fire another gun," said the commander, imperturbably. "Set every sail that will draw. Signal them to lay to at once, Mr. Watson!"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you formed a conjecture?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"I think they have a very good reason to avoid us," replied the executive officer

shrewdly. "I can give you my opinion in one word—filibuster."

Captain Brookes shook his head.

"I do not agree with you," he replied, gravely. "You will see that she is high in the water. If she carried a cargo of arms and stores she would be much deeper. No; I think we'll find something far more serious than Cuban filibustering."

"That's what I think," whispered little Nanny, sagely.

"What you think!" snorted Joy, who was out for revenge. "You! Humph! Why you wouldn't know the difference between a filibuster and a cowtree's horns. You! By Jake! all you need to become a dead idiot is a blow with a club or a kick from a superannuated jackass."

The little cadet stared at him for a moment, then he calmly turned his back and stooped over.

"Go on" he said.

"Go on what?"

"I am waiting for that kick."

And the officers at the other end of the bridge wondered what had caused the laughter.

In the meantime the second gun was being made ready for firing. It's sullen report was a warning not to be ignored, and presently several pieces of bunting appeared at the yacht's main truck. But there was no indication of laying to.

The Monongahela's navigator consulted his signal code and presently announced, with evident perplexity:

"That's a new system to me, sir. They show X. A. O. C., which means nothing at all."

"An attempt to deceive us," was the captain's prompt comment. "I am more than ever convinced that something is wrong."

"They are drawing away from us, sir," reported Mr. Watson.

"She is faster than the old Monongahela, that's certain. But," Captain Brookes, with a blow of his fist upon the railing, "she can't run away from a solid shot. Fire one across her bows, Mr. Watson."

This was done with a celerity that showed eager interest. The projectile struck within a hundred yards of the fugitive, and skipped fairly under the

yacht's bow, finally vanishing beneath the surface with a great splash.

It was a warning recognized at sea as meaning plainly, "If you do not stop I'll sink you!" And it had immediate effect.

The crew of the yacht was seen to rush to the running rigging and, a moment later, the two great fore and aft sails were shivering in the wind. She had laid to at last.

"Place the ship within easy hailing distance," ordered Captain Brookes. "It's a pity the sea is so rough, else I'd send a boat's crew aboard."

There were two hundred pairs of eyes watching the stranger when the practice ship finally arrived within a short distance. And there were more than one pair of eyes returning the compliment on the other vessel.

As she lay tossing upon the swell it was seen that her decks did not present the neat appearance generally to be expected on board such pleasure craft.

The hull was sharp and clean, and the brass-rimmed deadlights glinted brightly in the sun's rays, but there was a certain neglect apparent aloft that did not escape the experienced naval officers.

Forward and in the waist were probably a dozen men, and occupying the quarterdeck was a browny individual clad in a yachting suit three sizes too small for him.

As the Monongahela rounded to several letters of a name were seen under the yacht's stern. Clif, whose eyes were keen, read:

"F-l-e-e-t-w—"

The rest were gone.

"That's easy enough," he muttered to himself. "Add 'ing' to it and you have the whole name. It's the Fleetwing."

Further soliloquy was cut short by a hail from Captain Brookes who stood, trumpet to lips, at the extreme end of the bridge.

"Schooner-yacht ahoy!" he bawled.

"Ay! ay!" bellowed the man aft.

"What yacht is that?"

There was a brief hesitation, and the figure in the yachting uniform was seen to speak to any one of the crew standing a short distance away. The former then turned and replied sullenly:

"The Gem, of Liverpool."

Clif gave a start of surprise. That was not the name he had made out on the stern. What mystery was this?

"Why didn't you show your number at our request, sir?" demanded Captain Brookes, peremptorily.

"What the blazes is it to you?" was the unexpected reply, given fiercely. "We are minding our own business and you can do the same. I'll have the law on you for shooting at my craft as sure as my name is—"

The words ended in a growl, and the speaker left the railing as if he considered the interview at an end. Clif and his companions looked at the captain.

His face was red with anger. The insolent reply to his question was as irritating as it was unanticipated.

"Now we'll see some sport," whispered Nanny, gleefully. "Gee! I wish the old man would tell us to give that fellow a broadside."

But the "old man" had no such decisive intentions, at least not yet. He glared at the yachtsman for a brief period, then thundered:

"You are as ignorant as you are unmannerly, sir. This is a United States man-of-war, I want you to know, sir, and international law—"

"I don't care a tinker's d—n for your law," roared the other, snapping his fingers derisively. "I have told you the name of this yacht, and that's all you will know. If you don't like it apply to my owner, Dubbs of Liverpool."

Captain Brooke's long service in the American navy, during which time he had earned a reputation for coolness under all circumstances, stood him in good stead now.

He knew that he had been grossly insulted, and defied by a man whose evident ignorance and incivility made his position as commander of a palatial yacht open to grave suspicion, but he had no intention of flying off at a tangent. He knew a trick worth two of that."

"My dear sir," he said, sweetly, "I have no desire to communicate with your owner. If he is cut out of the same cloth as yourself he must be a pretty yachtsman. But I'll tell you this much: I am a naval officer in charge of a naval ship, and I know my duty. You will remain

within hail until the sea subsides sufficiently to permit me to send a boat."

"And what if I refuse?" growled the other, returning to the rail.

"I'll sink you deeper than Davy Jones' locker!"

CHAPTER IV.

A DESPERATE MOVE.

A subdued cheer came from the Monongahela's crew, and Joy, forgetting his cherished reputation as a peacemaker, tossed his cap into the air.

"By Jake! that's the style!" he shouted. "That's the true American —"

Clif dragged him down and clapped one hand over his mouth in time to prevent a reprimand from the first lieutenant.

"Silence fore and aft!" cried that officer sternly. "We can dispense with cheers."

But he was fairly well pleased at the proof of patriotism just the same. And furthermore, the boys knew it, and they did not heed his reproof.

There were no cheers on board the yacht. Captain Brooke's firm threat delivered in a manner leaving no room for mistake, was received with evident consternation.

The supposed skipper glared from his position aft as if struck dumb. This lasted a moment, then he commenced to jump about the deck as if animated by springs.

"Sink me!" he bellowed. "Sink me! I dare you to! I'll have satisfaction if it takes my life. Fire away, durn you!" (he used a much stronger word). "Fire a broadside, you gold-laced upstart! I'll not remain within hail, and I defy you and your whole blasted navy. To blazes with you!"

He acted like a man demented. Several sailors were seen to draw near and apparently expostulate with him, but it was some minutes before he ceased to wave his hands and rave.

"I'd like to know the solution of this mystery," said Clif to Joy and Nanny. "That it is a mystery I feel assured. That fellow has some reason for lying about the name of the yacht."

"Lying about it?" echoed the lanky plebe. "How do you know?"

"Didn't you see that fragment of a name on the stern?"

"No."

"Well, I did. There were six small raised letters, and they spelled part of the name Fleetwing. The f-l-e-e-t and w were still there."

"And he said that the yacht was the Gem of Liverpool."

"Do you think the captain knows it?" eagerly queried Nanny.

Clif was doubtful. He glanced toward the Monongahela's commander who was in consultation with several of his officers.

"I don't know whether he does or not," he replied to the little cadet's question. "Surely I was not the only one to notice it."

"I believe I'd mention it to the old man, Clif," advised Joy, seriously.

Faraday promptly walked to the other end of the bridge and, touching his cap, said respectfully:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but while we were passing the stern of the yacht I noticed a portion of a name, and it was not that mentioned by the man in uniform."

Captain Brookes and his brother officers stared at the speaker in surprise. It was evident the information was new to them.

"Is that possible, Mr. Faraday?" exclaimed Captain Brookes. "What was the name?"

Clif explained briefly, and his words had an immediate effect.

"That settles it!" cried the first lieutenant. "The fellow is trying to fool us. He has reasons for concealing his yacht's name."

"We will solve the reason," replied the captain, grimly. "Call the crew to quarters, Mr. Watson, and bring a broadside to bear upon him."

The sound of a drum beating furiously, and the scurrying of the crew to their stations reached the yacht.

The action of wind and sea had carried her within five hundred yards, and her deck was now plainly visible. The martial sounds on board the practice ship caused instant commotion.

"They are going to fire on us," bawled

one of the sailors in a panic. "For Heaven's sake, Mike, give—"

The fellow was instantly surrounded by several of his mates, and his cry died away.

"Mike must be that beauty in the yachting uniform," exclaimed Clif, who had hurried to his station with Joy. "Look at him storm about the deck. He is threatening the sailor with his fist.

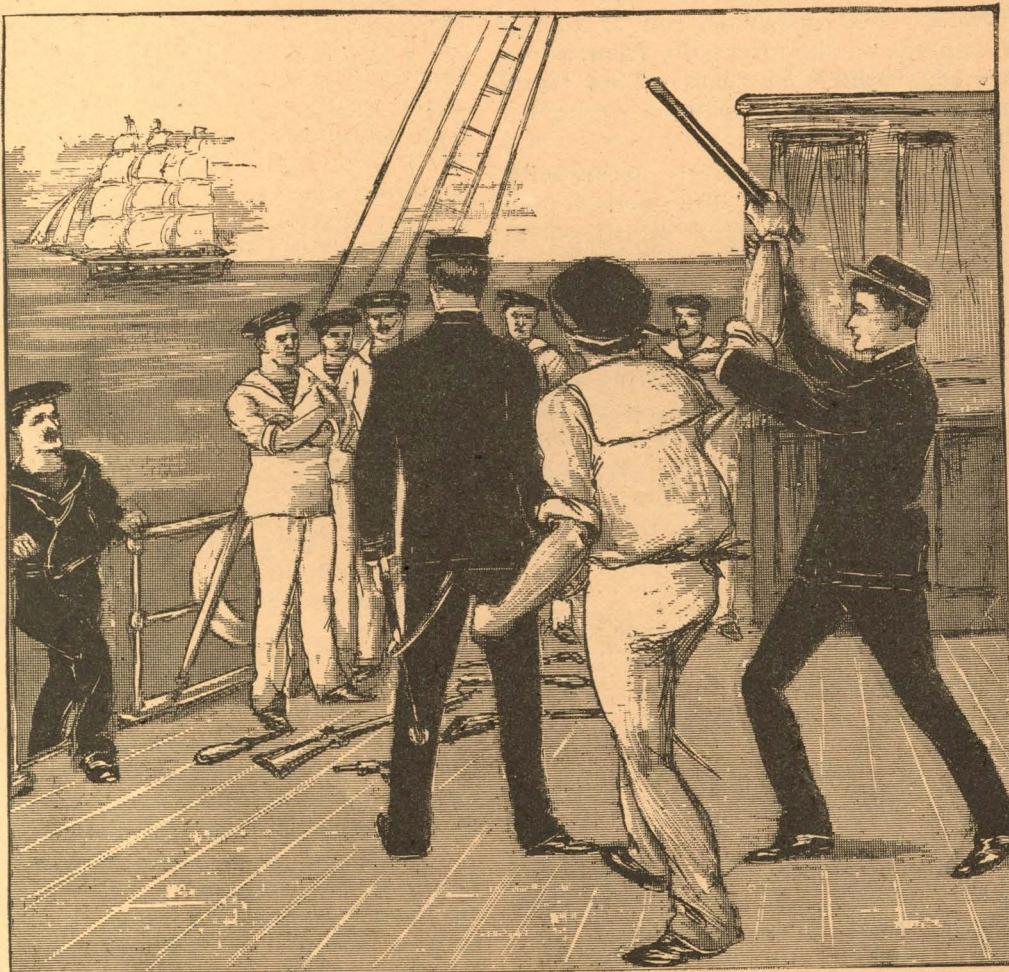
of the wind, and then started off like a racehorse.

Captain Brookes and his officers stared at each other in profound amazement.

"They are raving, stark mad," cried the first lieutenant. "They must know they can't run away from our guns."

"The fellows don't believe we will fire," spoke up the navigator.

"Or else they are absolutely desper-



CLIF GRASPED THE MUTINEER'S ARM AS HE RAISED THE IRON BAR (page 1453).

He—— Gorry! what are they up to now?"

This last exclamation was called forth by a sudden move on the part of the yacht's crew. At a word from the fellow called Mike they had jumped to the halliards and stays. The man at the wheel threw it over and in a jiffy the yacht's great spread of canvas was filled.

She heeled far over under the pressure

ate," remarked Captain Brookes. "I think they have something to conceal and will run any risk to prevent us from boarding."

"Orders, sir," said Mr. Watson, again the cool, resourceful naval officer.

"We'll give him another chance," replied the Monongahela's commander, reflectively. "I want to exhaust every means before firing. Stand in chase, sir.

Spread every stitch of canvas, and fire an occasional shot near him."

The excitement on board the practice cruiser was now intense. There was a tinge of real naval action in the affair and the hearts of every man beat with redoubled force. The strange conduct of the schooner-yacht and its crew lent an air of mystery that was extremely fascinating especially to the cadets.

When recall from quarters was sounded Clif and his chums hastily sought a point of vantage on the forecastle, from which they could watch the chase. They found the yacht standing away like a frightened gull.

It presented a beautiful picture with its towering wings of white, and sloping deck and lean graceful hull a-glitter with salty spray.

"It would be a pity to destroy such a splendid craft," said Clif, contemplatively. "See how she slips over the waves! She seems to spurn the water. Gorry! I'd give a year of my life to possess a yacht like that."

"She make fine private ship for me," remarked Trolley. "I buy yacht in America before I go back to Japan. My guardian he pay plenty quick for what I want."

"You'll never have a chance to buy that craft if the old man doesn't adopt energetic measures pretty soon. She's slipping away from us as if we were anchored."

Suddenly a dull flapping of canvas far overhead attracted the attention of all. Looking aloft they saw the leeches of the upper sails shivering. There was a bellying back and forth of the topsails, then the great mainsail flapped inward.

"The wind is dropping," cried Clif. "Gorry! what'll we do now?"

"The yacht will gain another mile before she catches the calm," added Joy, regretfully. "Now's the time to give her a broadside."

The shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle sounded aft followed by a stentorian voice calling all hands to trim sails. The yards soon swarmed with active lads, and everything possible was done to coax speed out of the old cruiser, but the wind gradually died down to a dead calm, and

the Monongahela rolled heavily in the trough of the sea.

By this time the superior speed of the yacht had carried her fully two miles away. She still held the wind and almost another mile was added to this before she too finally became becalmed.

Captain Brookes seemed vastly relieved. He marched back and forth on the bridge rubbing his hands with the air of a man to whom good fortune had paid an unexpected visit.

"This simplifies matters greatly, gentlemen," he said. "From the appearance of the weather, this calm will last all day. And before the breeze springs up again we'll know all about the mystery surrounding that yacht."

"Mr. Watson," he added to the executive officer, "have the sailing launch and first cutter armed and equipped for duty at once. They will be called away just as soon as the water is smooth enough."

When the news reached the forecastle, which it did with lightning-like rapidity, Clif and Joy fairly danced. They were both members of the sailing launch's crew. And Trolley and Nanny were correspondingly depressed for they were not.

An hour later the two boats, heavily manned, left the side of the practice ship on their mission of war.

CHAPTER V.

CLIF FARADAY'S WIT.

It was a long pull and a hard pull over the still restless ocean. The sun beat down with midsummer warmth but the boats' crews toiled manfully at the oars.

The sailing launch was a great lumbering craft not meant for rowing, and the twelve oarsmen, six on a side, found their task a difficult one. There were extra hands in the boat, however, and reliefs were frequent.

It was fully two hours before the little attacking party arrived within hailing distance of the yacht. The senior deck officer of the Monongahela, Lieutenant Cole, had charge.

He was a capable man, and it was believed that he would settle the affair with neatness and dispatch. Under him and in charge of the cutter was an ensign named Dudley.

As the two boats swept nearer the

yacht it was seen that the rail was entirely free of heads. Not one member of the crew was visible.

What did it portend?

"Cutter ahoy!" called out Lieutenant Cole.

"Ay ay, sir?"

"Pull toward the port bow and board by way of the anchor chain or dolphin striker if you can. Leave several of your men with rifles leveled. If resistance is offered use whatever force is necessary."

The cutter pushed on ahead and the sailing launch was steered toward the starboard gangway. Standing up in the stern, the lieutenant shouted authoritatively:

"Yacht ahoy!"

Not a sound came from the graceful craft; not a face appeared above the rail. Lieutenant Cole waited patiently for a minute, then he repeated the hail. All was as silent as the grave.

There was something uncanny in the scene. The beautiful yacht with its sweep of snow-white canvas, its splendid hull and glistening brasswork, rose and fell sluggishly upon the long heaving swell, giving the impression of some giant bird plumed for flight.

It was a picture, but there was something wanting. The absence of life made it seem weird and supernatural. It was like a palace fully furnished and entirely untenanted.

"Gorry! it looks as if they have a surprise for us," whispered Clif to his seatmate, Joy.

"We'll have the last laugh," was the lanky middy's grim reply. "There will be one less gold-trimmed yacht afloat if they try any monkey business."

The lieutenant's patience was finally exhausted. Drawing his sword, he gave the word to pull ahead. The extra men in the launch were ordered to prepare their cutlasses for immediate use.

As the craft dashed up to the permanent sea ladder at the gangway the cutter gained the bow. Lieutenant Cole signaled Ensign Dudley to board, then he clambered up the side. With him went Clif, Joy and several others, all armed and in readiness for any emergency.

They halted immediately on reaching the deck. Not a man was visible. For-

ward and aft not a soul could be seen. The sails were idly flapping with the roll of the hull; an unfastened deck bucket rattled noisily in the scuppers, and banging with a defiant note against the mainmast was a halliard block left there by careless hands.

There were sounds a plenty, but not of human life.

"They are playing tag with us," smiled the lieutenant. "Well, we will see who will be 'it' in a moment. Mr. Faraday, run forward and tell Ensign Dudley to search the forecastle. I'll attend to—"

He was suddenly interrupted by a hoarse cry. Immediately following came a hubbub of curses and shouts, then the short door of the cabin companion burst open, and a man clad in a sailor's uniform scrambled out through the opening.

"Help! help!" he shrieked. "They are trying to kill me! I'll tell all. Help! help!"

A figure leaped after and caught him by the neck. It was Mike, the supposed commander of the yacht. He clutched a heavy belaying pin in one hand, and before the men from the Monongahela could interfere he brought it down upon the terrified sailor's head.

As the victim dropped to the deck Mike turned and with incredible swiftness disappeared down the companion-way. The sounds of a slamming door followed.

Lieutenant Cole lowered his revolver, which he had cocked a second or two late, and ran aft. Clif and the others were at his heels. As they passed the prostrate man, the fellow gave a gasp and struggled to a sitting position.

"I'll have your life for this, Mike Kergan!" he muttered thickly. "Blast you, I'll see that you hang higher than purgatory. You got us into this scrape, and you'll suffer. Water! water, for the love of Heaven!"

Clif was at his side with a cup from a near by breaker. The refreshing draught worked wonders. The man staggered to his feet and glared about as if dazed for a moment, then catching sight of the lieutenant, he rushed up to him and knelt at his feet.

"Don't blame us all for this, sir," he begged, piteously. "It wasn't our fault.

That devil Kerrigan made us do it. He killed the captain and set the rest adrift. I'll turn State's witness if you'll only promise to hang Mike."

"Some of you guard that companion-way," said Lieutenant Cole, crisply. "See to it that none steps on deck until I question them. Now, my man, what is your story?"

It was brief. From the sailor's trembling lips came a tale often heard before in the records of the sea—a tale of a captain's harshness and the final outbreak of passion and revenge on the part of the crew.

Shorn of incoherent pleading of mercy and wild denunciations of the arch scoundrel, Kerrigan, it told of the departure of the yacht Fleetwing from Boston en route to Norfolk, where the owner was to join with a party of friends for a West India cruise. It told how the captain, one Biggs, had nagged the crew until forbearance ceased to be a virtue, and how at last, led by the boatswain's mate, Mike Kerrigan, the crew mutinied at sea.

Then came a stolid description of Biggs' murder at night by Mike and the sending adrift in an open boat of the two mates and the cabin steward. And finally how the sighting of the Monongahela had brought the present condition of affairs.

"Mike intended to beach the Fleetwing in the southern portion of Florida and escape," said the sailor in conclusion. "He told us we could take the fixings and sell 'em for a big sum. But I want to tell ye, sir, Mike's a desperate man. He swears he won't be taken alive. We tried to make him give up when your ship came alongside, but he threatened to knife us if we so much as whimpered. Ye'll remember, sir, that I've risked my life to help ye. Do what you can in court for me, sir."

"You will get due credit," replied Lieutenant Cole, curtly. "So it is a mutiny, eh? I thought as much. We'll teach Mike Kerrigan that the days of mutiny are past."

Ensign Dudley came aft at a call and the two officers approached the closed companionway. Rapping lustily with his sword hilt upon the cover, Lieutenant Cole called out imperiously:

"Below there! Mike Kerrigan, I wish a word with you."

"Go to blazes," replied a muffled voice.

"Resistance is useless," continued the lieutenant. "We know the truth and we'll have you out of that if we have to burn the deck over your head."

"Burn and be durned!" shouted the desperate Irishman. "I've got a card to play, too. If yez are not off this here yacht in ten minutes I'll blow every mother's son of us up. I've got a keg of powder down here, and I'll set it off as sure as my name is Mike Kerrigan."

"He'll do it, sir. Oh, he'll do it," cried the wounded sailor. "I know he has the powder, and he's that desperate he'll blow up the yacht rather than be taken."

It was an awkward predicament, and Lieutenant Cole looked extremely grave. During his career in the service he had had experience with more than one desperate villain, and he felt assured Kerrigan meant what he said.

Justifiable discretion is no reflection on bravery. It would be a fool's act to expose the crews of the cutter and launch to certain death just to capture a mutineer.

"I'll have him yet and I won't lose a man, either," muttered the lieutenant. "Now to temporize."

"Such silly threats won't help you, Kerrigan," he added, aloud. "Better surrender and save trouble. Your talk about blowing up the yacht won't wash. Open this door before I break it in."

"Try it once," was the dogged reply. "I've got a match ready, and ye'll all be in kingdom come a minute after ye break that door."

"The devil means it," said Joy to Clif, glumly. "By Jake! I don't want a pair of wings just yet. I wish we could capture him without so much risk."

"If we could get at Kerrigan and disable him the rest would surrender without a word," replied Faraday, thoughtfully. "I wonder—"

He stepped quickly over to the wounded sailor and eagerly asked him several questions, then he drew Lieutenant Cole aside. While the others looked

on in surprise the two whispered together for a moment.

"It's a splendid idea, Faraday," finally said the lieutenant, "and if we succeed it will be because of your keen wit. But it's mighty risky, mighty risky, indeed."

"I only suggest the plan for what it is worth, sir," modestly replied the cadet.

"We'll try it, and may success attend our efforts."

Several minutes later one of the launch's crew, a sailor who wore a naval sharpshooter's medal, stepped to the port side of the yacht with two mates. The latter bore ropes which they deftly fastened about his waist.

As he was silently lowered over the side it was seen that he carried a cocked revolver.

"What's your scheme, Clif?" hurriedly asked Joy.

"There's a port-hole opening directly into the cabin," was the brief reply. "It commands the foot of the stairs, and that is where Kerrigan is standing. Wilkins is going to take a pot shot at him, but if he misses I guess——"

Bang!

Every man on deck jumped at the shot. Some rushed to the side, and others made a dash toward the gangway. There was a moment of silence, then a loud uproar sounded below.

Wilkins, the sharpshooter, climbed over the railing and dropped to the deck as lightly as a cat.

"I got him, sir," he said coolly.

"Good!" exclaimed Lieutenant Cole, never moving a muscle. He added, authoritatively: "Break open the companionway, men."

Clif and Joy, assisted by a number of sailors, soon had the door in splinters. Peering down through the opening thus formed, the lieutenant called out sharply:

"Come on deck, all of you. If you have arms, bring them up. I'll give you three minutes to obey."

There was a confused murmuring of voices, then a man stepped on deck. He carried an inverted rifle in his hands as a token of submission. He was followed by another, and then another.

As the latter emerged from the com-

panionway, the wounded sailor nudged Clif and whispered:

"That is Murphy, Mike Kerrigan's mate. He is in a temper, too."

The cadet eyed the man's sullen, ugly face and said to himself:

"I'll keep watch on him. He doesn't look safe."

"Now muster in line there and throw your weapons on deck," commanded Lieutenant Cole, sternly.

As the sailors sullenly obliged, Clif, who had his eyes on Murphy, saw him suddenly spring forward. Divining his intention, Clif leaped to his side and grasped the mutineer's arm as he raised an iron bar over Lieutenant Cole's head.

There was a quick sharp struggle, then a half-dozen of the launch's crew fell upon the Irishman and literally bore him to the deck. A moment later he was lying bruised and battered, bound hand and foot, in the scuppers.

"I'll not forget that, Faraday," said the lieutenant, simply.

That little episode ended the affair. Kerrigan's body was brought up from below. An examination revealed the fact that Wilkins' bullet had pierced the brain; and it was felt by all that the shot was indeed a lucky one.

The Monongahela was signaled, and a half-hour later the cutter was sent for orders.

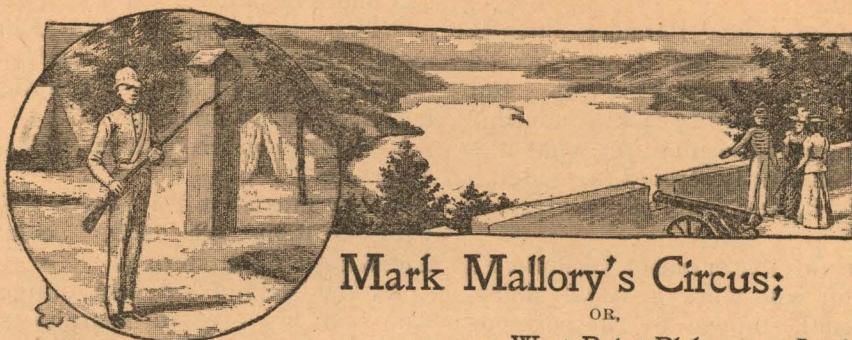
In due time Captain Brookes sent word to transfer the prisoners to the practice ship. When this was finally accomplished, Lieutenant Cole was ordered to select a prize crew and to make the best of his way to Norfolk, Virginia.

To the great satisfaction of Clif and Joy, they were included in the detail. Shortly before dark a breeze sprang up in the northeast, and both vessels got under way for the trip to the selected destination.

And thus peacefully ended the chase of the yacht Fleetwing.

[THE END.]

The next Naval Academy novelette by Ensign Clarke Fitch will be entitled, "Clif Faraday in Jeopardy; or, At the Mercy of His Foes," Army and Navy No. 32.



Mark Mallory's Circus; OR, West Point Plebes on a Lark.

By Lieut. Frederick Garrison, U. S. A.

CHAPTER I.

TEXAS ACCEPTS A CHALLENGE.

"SMITHERS' CIRCUS.

"To-day! Don't miss it! The greatest show on earth!"

"Magnificent Menagerie, gathered from all parts of the globe!"

"Madame Nicolini, the daring equestrienne!"

"The Alberti Brothers, world-renowned acrobats!"

"Prof. Montmorency and his marvelous trained dogs, exhibited before the Prince of Wales."

"Bobo, the most humorous clown ever known!"

"Smasher! The wild, untamed Texas bronco, ridden by no living man and—"

"Durnation!"

The speaker dropped the flaring red programme he was reading and sprang up in excitement.

"Say, you fellows," he roared, "come over hyar an' listen."

"What's the matter, Texas?"

"This hyar circus feller down to Highlan' Falls says he's got a bronco nobody kin ride, doggone his boots!"

"Well, what about it?"

"What about it? Durnation, man, d'you s'pose I'm a-goin' to swaller an insult like that air? Whoop! What d'you take me fo', anyhow?"

This vigorous declaration from "Texas" brought the other two occu-

pants of his tent to his side, their faces alight with interest. The tent was one of Camp McPherson, the summer home of the West Point cadets. "Texas" was a plebe, or new cadet, and his name was Jeremiah Powers.

Texas had been reading a typical circus advertisement, a notice of a show that was scheduled for that Saturday afternoon down at "the Falls," a village just below West Point. And Texas was mad.

"That air feller ain't got sense 'nough to walk straight," he vowed, dancing around after his usual fashion when his excitable disposition was disturbed. "The very idee o' saying there's a bronco in all Texas a man kain't handle ef he's used to 'em. That air's an insult to every cowboy in the State, an' durnation, I ain't a-goin' to stand it!"

"What are you going to do about it?" inquired one of his tentmates.

It was Parson Stanard, the long-legged and solemn scholar from Boston.

"Do 'bout it! I'm a-goin' down to that air town right after dinner an' I'm a-goin' to ride that air durnation ole hoss ef it's the last thing I ever do while I'm 'live."

"But it's out of bounds, man. You won't be allowed to go. You'll be seen."

"I'll git a disguise," said the other, with decision. "I ain't a-goin' to spend

a holiday afternoon sittin' roun' this hyar camp while there's a circus goin' on. You fellers kin ef you want to. I ain't ever seen a circus, only once, an' that was the same day I went to church. I rode fifty-six miles 'cross country to take in the both of 'em."

After imparting that interesting bit of information, Texas seated himself on the platform of the tent once more and fell to reading assiduously the vivid programme of Smithers' Circus, with its Menagerie, Dime Museum and Theatre combined, to say nothing of Circassian ladies, tattooed South Sea Islanders, fat ladies and living skeletons. The whole thing impressed Texas mightily, and when he finished he turned to the other two in the tent.

"I'll bet you," he growled, "ef Mark Mallory war here he'd go with me. I dunno how I'd live in this hyar place ef Mark Mallory warn't in it. He's got more life than any dozen o' you fellers. The Seven Devils, that air society we plebes got up to stop the hazin' wouldn't ever do anything ef 'twarn't fo' him bein' leader."

"When will he be out of hospital?" inquired one of the others.

"I dunno," said Texas, "but I reckon it'll be pretty soon now. The burns air most all healed 'cept his hands, an' durnation, they won't keep him in fo' that."

"He always war lucky," Texas continued, after a moment's pause. "Jes' think. He won't have to do anything now but set roun' an' watch us plebes drill all day. An' see how he's fooled them ole cadets, too. He said he wouldn't let 'em haze him and he's licked every feller they sent to fight him. Then when they tried to make him fight Fischer, the one decent chap in the class an' Mark's friend, he said he wouldn't. An' after standin' all their durnation abuse all day he pitched in an' rescued that girl from the fire when they warn't a man of 'em dared it. They had to 'pologize after that."

"He was quite a hero, wasn't he, Texas?"

It was Mallory's voice!"

Texas wheeled with an exclamation of delight, and the others rushed out of the tent and made a leap at the cadet who

had thus laughingly spoken. He was a tall, handsome lad, with a frank, merry face. He had just entered camp and reached the tent as Texas concluded his discourse.

"Ef it ain't Mark Mallory!" roared the latter, dancing about him in an ecstasy of delight. "Whoop! Say, ole man, I'm durnation glad to see ye. Gee whiz!"

These excited exclamations had brought the rest of the "Seven Devils," Mark's secret society, out of their tents in a hurry. There were Parson Stanard, and Sleepy "the farmer," and "B'gee" Dewey, the prize story teller besides, Chauncey, "the dude," who thought it undignified to hurry, brought up the rear with "Indian," the fat boy of Indianapolis. And the whole six got around Mark and fairly danced for joy at having their leader with them again.

"And b'gee, he's all well, too," chuckled Dewey; "all but his hands."

The "hands" of which this was said were for all the world like boxer's gloves, they were so wrapped with bandages. That was the only thing that kept the six from having a fight to get hold of them and shake. It was fully ten minutes before they had managed to get enough of their congratulations expressed to satisfy themselves, and even then Mallory had to threaten to get mad if they didn't stop telling him what a hero he was.

"I'll run away to Texas," he vowed, laughing.

"Where there are broncos you can ride," put in Dewey, with a sly wink at the object of this allusion.

"Durnation!" cried Texas. "That's so! I 'mos' forgot 'bout that air bronco since Mark come. Whoop!"

"What bronco?" inquired Mark, curious to know what new excitement his wild friend had found.

Texas told him, and as a clincher held the paper up before his eyes.

"Thar 'tis," said he. "You kin read it an' see. Smasher—— I'll smash him, doggone his boots——"

"Do Texas' horses wear boots?" inquired Dewey, anxiously. "B'gee, we never go better than plain shoes up our way."

"Look a-yere, Mark," demanded Texas, scorning to notice Dewey's inter-

ruption. "I was jes' a-sayin' ef you were hyer you'd go to that air circus an' bust up the durnation old fake place with me. Naow will you?"

"Of course I will," responded Mark. "So will the rest, too, I guess. I've been penned up in that old hospital for an age, and I'm just dying for a lark."

"But where'll we get disguises?" inquired the matter of fact Parson.

"I guess one of the drum orderlies can buy us some," laughed the other. "We ought to have some 'cits' clothing handy, anyway, so that we can be ready for some fun any time."

"And we can keep it in that cave we found!" chirruped Indian, happily. "Bless my soul, that'll be fine! I'll go! I think it'll be lots of fun to go to a circus in disguise."

"Circuses are deucedly vulgah affairs," commented the aristocratic Chauncey, with a sniff.

But even that young gentleman condescended to go when he found that all the rest were swept away by the prospect of seeing Texas ride "Smasher." And as for Texas, he doubled up his fists and gritted his teeth and vowed he was going "to smash that durnation ole show or git smashed doin' it!"

Texas was destined to have all the fun he wanted that afternoon.

CHAPTER II.

THE CIRCUS AT HIGHLAND FALLS.

Drills were over for that day, and likewise dinner, and the corps had been dismissed, excepting members who had extra tours of guard duty to do by way of punishment. This included one of the seven, the unfortunate granger from Kansas, "Sleepy," who had forgotten to invert his washbowl at the "A. M. inspection."

Poor Sleepy was obliged to shoulder his musket with what grace he could and sadly watch his friends vanish in the woods.

The wicked drummer boy, who was getting rich nowadays by furnishing contraband disguises for the yet more wicked Seven Devils, had designated a place where he would hide the "duds," and for that place the seven made with all

possible speed. Some hour or so later there were three curious-looking couples strolling down the road to the Falls.

The drum orderly, with considerable appropriateness, had furnished a full dress evening suit for Chauncey. It being afternoon, Chauncey had indignantly refused to "dream" of wearing it, and so the meek Indian had had his fat limbs crowded into the costume. Texas had a flaming red sweater and huge farmer's trousers with one suspender. Mark had the tattered remains of a tennis blazer and checkerboard "pants." The Parson was muttering anathemas at the facetious lad who had gotten, from somewhere, a clerical costume with a rip up the back, and Dewey was handsome and resplendent in one of the drum orderly's own cast-off uniforms. Poor Chauncey having refused the swallow-tails, was doomed to be common place in a white flannel costume last worn by a coal heaver.

Do you wonder at the phrase "curious-looking couples" used above?

It had been agreed that they would excite less suspicion two by two. All in a crowd they might be mistaken for the rear guard of the circus procession, which they could tell from the sound of the hand had proceeded them down the main street of Highland Falls. The six set out swiftly in pursuit.

Texas fairly boiling over with anxiety to catch a glimpse of Smasher. Texas had done nothing but talk about Smasher since he started.

If there had chanced to be any officers from the post down there they would probably have recognized their cadets, in spite of false mustaches and hair. For the plebes were so used to going behind a band by this time that the tune—"The Girl I Left Behind Me"—set them all to marching with West Point precision—"left, left! Eyes to the front—heads up—chest out, little fingers on the seems of the trousers—left, left!"

Fortunately, however, nobody noticed their rather unusual style, and down at the far end of the long and narrow town they came upon the circus grounds. No small boy enjoying his holiday from school was gazing upon that scene with more interest than our plebes.

There were three big tents in a vacant

lot. The band had gone inside by that time, and a string of people were following, buying their tickets of a black and long-haired "genuine Australian bushman" who stood as a walking live hint to the wonders that were inside, and incidentally made change wrong and talked in Irish brogue to an invisible some one.

Also worthy of mention was "Tent No. 2." We shall see a good deal of the contents of Tent No. 2. Tent No. 2 was the

artist had painted half her head. There was a seal playing a banjo on the next panel, while a charmed boa constrictor listened. The boa constrictor's tail was traced to the other side of the tent, his body having extended all that way. So he was a pretty big snake. Texas vowed he'd never seen a bigger one even with the whisky they sold down home. And after that the six made a stampede for the main tent.



ROUND AND ROUND SWEPT TEXAS IN A FAST NARROWING CIRCLE OF ROPE (page 1461).

dime museum tent, and varied and startling were its decorations. A two-headed boy grinned merrily at a painted hyena on one side. It was a laughing hyena, but the boy got the best of him because he had two heads to laugh with. A Norwegian giant (colored) had the next side to herself, and so tall was she that a sort of continued-in-our-next arrangement was made with the roof, where a careful

They stopped just long enough for Chauncey, "the gent with the white clothes and black whiskers," to invest in peanuts. He told the man to keep the change with a haughty air, and then bid his friends help themselves. They took so many there wasn't any change, at which the man growled.

In spite of jokes and peanuts they finally got into the tent. They bought

their tickets separately so that their seats might be separate, and then found to their horror that the Australian bushman had sold them six in a row, and that every one in the place was staring at their extraordinary costumes. This rather phased them, but they tried to look as if they didn't care and stared around the tent.

After some munching of peanuts and stamping of feet (this latter chiefly by Texas, he of the carmine sweater and no coat, who was anxious to smash Smasher) a bell rang and the show had begun. A curtain opened at one side and in galloped a white horse and rider. Texas sprang up and started for the ring with a durnation. Texas thought it was Smasher, and he grumbled some when he found it was only "Madame Nicolini, the daring equestrienne!" Texas admitted that her riding wasn't bad, but he vowed he'd make her turn pale with envy when he once set out on Smasher. Seeing that Madame Nicolini had a perpetual blush of red paint that beat her rival's sweater, Texas finally took back his rash threat and settled down to growl once more.

Mr. Jeremiah Powers had to curb his impatience. The programme wasn't going to be changed for him. There were "daring aerial flights" at which the old ladies gasped and the fair damsels shrieked. There were performing dogs at which every one observed "How cute!" a safe remark which the most critical could not dispute. There were the Alberti Brothers, who bowed whether you applauded or not, and the usual trick elephant who rang for his dinner when the clown told him not to, whereat the old gentlemen who had brought their little boys to enjoy the show laughed most uproariously and asked the doubtful little boys if it wasn't funny.

And then came Smasher!

The curtain opened once more and the little bronco, meek and gentle, was led out. He was "nothin' much," so Texas said "orter see my Tiger down home." Texas had been persuaded by Mark to wait and see what else would happen before he ventured down, and so Texas was silent though wriggling anxiously in his seat.

A "gent" in full-dress, just like In-

dian, was leading Smasher by the bridle. Having reached the middle of the ring he released the horse, who hung his head and looked like a poor, sleepy, half-starved little pony that would run from a mouse. Then the gent, who was "Smithers" himself, began thus:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen! We are about to witness the most interesting event of the varied programme of this marvelous and startling show. Behold Smasher (Durnation!), the world renowned bronco (Never heard o' him!) Now there must be gents in the audience who can ride, gents with sporting blood in their veins (Doggone your boots!), gents who are willing, even anxious to show their skill. Ladies and gentlemen, Smasher challenges the world! Behold him!"

This masterpiece having been finished, Smithers folded his arms. Mark was sitting on Texas meanwhile.

"Somebody'll try it, old man," Mark protested. "Just keep quiet. He's not going away yet. It'll be more fun after he's thrown somebody—there now!"

This last exclamation of relief came as some one did come forward to try. He was a country Yokell in his best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Having brought his best girl to town, and being secure in his skill with his farm plugs, he strode forward timidly to make a name for himself in Highland Falls forever.

"Ah!" said Smithers, serenely. "One gent has nerve! I knew that America with her sons of freedom could produce one man bold enough to dare this feat."

The country youth hesitated a moment in front of his mount, while the crowd leaned forward in expectation. Having petted Smasher in a professional way and observed that the horse still hung its sleepy head, the rider summoned all his nerve and straddled the pony. The pony was so small and the man's legs so long that his toes still touched the saw dust.

Smasher never moved an inch; even his eyes never opened. The yokel took hold of the bridle, straightened himself up to a stiff and awkward position and gazed about him with an air of delicious triumph. The multitude began to cheer.

"That's fine," said Smithers, smiling

blandly. "Really fine! Now make him go."

The hayseed laid hold of the bridle and gave it a jerk.

"Git ap!" said he.

And the bronco got. He only moved one-half of his body; his heels went up in one cataclysmic plunge, and the rider went through the air like a streak. He picked himself up with a good deal of sawdust in his mouth, way over in the opposite corner. The crowd simply howled with laughter and Smithers beamed benignantly.

"The challenge still stands," said he, laughing at the plight of the farmer, who limped to his seat with a look on his face that led the facetious cornetist in the band to play faintly:

"I'll never go there any more."

Which made the crowd laugh all the louder.

"Next!" roared the proprietor. "Somebody else come try it now! Next!"

At this stage of the game Mark unbotled Texas; and Texas rose slowly and made his way down to the ring.

"I reckon I'll try that air critter," said he.

Smithers' smile was as expansive as his shirt front. Two such fellows as this were a rare treat; usually every one was daunted by the first failure. This fellow was evidently a regular hayseed, too.

"Most charmed," said the proprietor. "Step right up, I pray you. Really, sir—" There was something about his self-confident smile that "riled" our excitable Texan.

"Look a-yere!" he demanded, angrily, when he reached the ring. "You think I kain't ride this hyar durnation critter, don't you? Hey?"

The whole crowd in that tent leaned forward excitedly; here was fun, a chance of a quarrel.

"Why, I'm sure I don't know," grinned the proprietor, suavely. "How should I know? Try it."

"You got any money?" roared Texas.

"Why—er—yes. A little."

Mr. Powers jammed his hand into one pocket and yanked out some bills.

"Go you one hundred I ride him!" he shouted.

"Bully, b'gee!" cried a voice in the crowd, and the rest roared in concert.

Smithers looked embarrassed.

"I—that is—I've hardly got so much—I—"

"Shame! Shame!" howled the delighted spectators.

"Whar's that air sporting blood ye were a-talkin' 'bout?" roared Texas. "Durnation! I thought nobody'd ever ridden the critter, doggone his—er—shoes. Thought ye were so sure? 'Fraid, hey? I knowed it."

The crowd howled still louder.

"Tell ye what I'll do," cried Texas, waving his bills excitedly. "I'll go you this yere hundred to twenty! How's that?"

"Who'll hold the stakes?" inquired the proprietor, weakly.

"Put 'em down thar in the ring," said Texas. "Let everybody see 'em. Durnation!"

Smithers left the tent hurriedly, while the crowd roared with impatience. He came back with the money, which Texas examined cautiously, and then dropped with his own on the sawdust. And then he turned toward the sleepy bronco.

"I'm ready now," said he. "Bring the durnation critter hyar."

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH TEXAS PERFORMS.

You have perhaps read of Ben Hur and the famous chariot race, and remember how General Wallace describes the staring crowds about that amphitheatre. There was no one there a bit more thrilled and interested than the spectators of Smithers' World Renowned Circus at this supreme moment. They were leaning forward, some of them having even risen to their feet; they were staring with open mouth, scarcely breathing.

The sympathies of every one were with that strange and outlandishly costumed stranger who seemed to have so much money and nerve. There is nothing people enjoy more than seeing "a bluff called."

Texas meanwhile was proceeding with a business-like cautiousness. He examined the saddle girth and the stirrups and tightened both. Then after another sur-

vey he concluded that they didn't suit him, and flung them off altogether.

"He's going to ride bareback!" gasped the crowd.

That was the stranger's purpose, evidently. He next examined the bridle, giving Smasher's head a vigorous shake incidentally and making that wicked animal open one eye in surprise. And after that Texas was ready.

He stood at the horse's head regarding him just one moment, and then seizing him by the mane, swung himself into the air and landed with a thud upon the pony's back.

As usual, Smasher never moved. Texas did not wait for him to get ready to start, but dug his heels into his side with a crash that made the bronco leap two feet into the air, and gave a yank at the bit that made his head snap back. And then there was all the fun the most fastidious could want. The centre of the ring was a perfect whirl of legs and bodies. The pony flung his hind feet into the air and then danced about on them; Texas simply dug his knees into his sides and his heels into his ribs and sat up straight as an arrow, yelling in Texas dialect meanwhile.

Then Smasher reared himself upon his hind legs; he bit and he plunged, and he kicked; he whirled around in a circle; he flung himself on the sawdust and rolled about the ring.

At this last move Texas had slipped off quick as lightning and stood calmly by, still holding the reins and yelling at the pony. The pony struggled to his feet again; while he was still on his knees Texas had thrown himself on his back and was once more kicking and shouting:

"Git up, thar, you durnation critter, you! Git up, thar!"

Smasher got, and he started around that ring at breakneck speed, tossing his head and plunging, his body leaning at an angle of thirty degrees and the sawdust flying in clouds. Round and round he went. Smithers was staring in horror, the crowd was roaring with delight, and as for Texas, he was waving his hat and shouting triumphantly.

"Get up, thar, you durnation ole Smasher! I'll smash you! That the fastest you kin go? Whoop!"

Smasher tried a little faster yet, until the crowd got dizzy watching him. Then he tried one last resort more, stopped short as if he'd hit a stone wall. Texas simply clung and then gave him a whack that set him off for dear life again. Texas knew that he'd conquered then.

"Durnation!" he roared. "Got any more ov 'em to break? Ain't had so much fun in a year! Whoop! You circus folks think you kin ride, don't you? I'll show ye something! Durnation!"

Suiting the action to the word, Texas, still lashing the horse to keep him going and still roaring to keep him straight, got upon his knees and then on his feet. Having stood on one leg for a couple of turns he dropped the reins, turned over and flung his heels into the air. After that he dropped his hat and swept it up on the next turn round. Then seizing hold of the horse's mane, he slid under his belly and a moment later appeared on the other side, and jerked himself up, Smasher meanwhile going at railroad speed. Nobody in the crowd saw how he did it, but they roared with delight all the same, and Smithers gritted his teeth with rage.

But Texas was by no means through yet. All his cowboy ingenuity had gone into the task of thinking up a suitable punishment for "that durnation circus feller" who had ventured to insult the nationality of cowboys. And Texas was getting ready to put a scheme into practice, while he still thumped merrily on the ribs of the dizzy bronco. He was fumbling about the pockets of his voluminous trousers, and suddenly the crowd, divining his intentions, let out a roar of delight.

"He's got a lasso!"

Texas did have a lasso, a "rope," he would have called it; if there was anything on earth he prided himself on it was his skill at "throwin' a rope." He had an arm half a foot thick as a result, and had half murdered several venturesome yearlings with it. Texas was going to show some of the dexterity of that arm right now.

Of course the crowd was simply wild with expectation and curiosity. Even Smithers, from his position in the centre of the ring, forgot about his lost twenty,

and began turning round and round to see what the rider was doing. The rider was unwinding the lariat from his body. That did not take him very long, and then he flung it into the air and began to whirl it gracefully about his head.

"Whoop!" he roared, getting faster and faster, and driving Smasher at a perfect tear. "Whoop! Durnation!"

"Hooray!" howled the crowd. "Hooray!"

And then suddenly, having gotten his distance and aim, Texas let drive that lasso. The result electrified and horrified every person in the place. For the noose sailed through the air, and before the amazed Smithers could even raise an arm it settled comfortably over his shoulders and the momentum of the pony jerked it tight as a vise.

The circus proprietor let out a yell that drowned even the roars of the Texan. He imagined himself hurled to the ground and dragged head first about the place. That was what the frightened crowd thought too, as they sprang up shouting. But Texas had arranged things more wisely than that.

He had gauged the length of the lasso just so that the proprietor felt himself jerked forward and obliged to run to maintain his equilibrium. Onward rushed Smasher in a big circle, and onward also the reluctant, indignant, vociferously protesting Smithers in a little circle near the centre of the ring. He could not stop; he could do nothing but run round and round with might and main, while the crowd fairly went into spasms of delight, and Texas roared whoops and durnations by the bucketful.

This delicious game continued until the proprietor stopped from sheer exhaustion. He stood still, panting, and before he could move again Texas had worked one more scheme. Round and round he swept in a fast narrowing circle of rope, while Smithers found, to his horror, that his arms were bound tight to his sides, he being swiftly reduced to the state of a mummy or an Indian totem pole. In vain he howled. Texas had the hilarious crowd with him, and he didn't care a durnation anyhow. He finished the job neatly and then brought Smasher to a halt, and, dismount-

ing, bowed with mock ceremony to the imprisoned proprietor. Then he pocketed his money with a flourish and marched back to his seat, the cynosure of every eye in the place. The sputtering victim he left to be unwound by one of the circus hands.

It was fully ten minutes before that show could go on. Texas was obliged to get up and bow to an encore three times, while Smithers shook his fist in impotent rage. Smasher was led off meekly. As to him, it may be said here that he never again went on the stage; the poor beast was sold to an itinerant peddler, for he was so docile that a child might ride him after that. But meanwhile, there was more excitement at the circus.

Texas having satiated the applauding multitude, turned to receive the congratulations of his delighted friends. To his surprise, he found that two of them, Mark and Dewey, were missing.

"Whar's Mark?" he cried, anxiously.

"Mark!" echoed the other four, in just as much surprise.

They had not noticed that in the excitement Mark and his friend, the prize story-teller, had gotten up and slipped away. But gone they were, after some fun, so Texas surmised, and vowed it was durnation mean in them to leave him. As if he hadn't had fun enough already!

We shall follow the two mischief makers, for they were destined to meet with some interesting adventures before they returned to their companions.

Mark had a definite reason for stealing away thus unceremoniously. He had a scheme he meant to put into effect; but as it happened, all thought of it was driven from his mind by something he chanced to notice a few minutes later.

At the rear of the circus tent was Smithers' "Magnificent Menagerie." Persons who had tickets to the circus were allowed to visit that menagerie and gaze upon its treasures—these included a single lean buffalo which was subsequently led out into the ring to perform; a single elephant who did likewise; the aforementioned laughing hyena, whose laugh had been somewhat embittered by bad treatment; and the world-famous "Smasher."

Toward this part of the show Mark and Dewey were leisurely strolling. Chatting merrily as usual. And then suddenly from inside the tent the band struck up a tune.

Now there was nothing startling about that. The band was accustomed to herald the entrance of each performer in that way. It was a very unmusical band; Dewey said it was cracked—"cracked into four pieces, b'gee!" he added. The band apparently knew only three or four tunes, one of them being "The Girl I Left Behind Me"—the song of Custer's famous Seventh. That was where the excitement came in.

The West Point band had often played that tune and the cadets were used to marching to it. Mark had noticed four young fellows strolling just ahead of him; at the very first notes of that tune the four straightened up as one man and stepped forward—left! left! A moment later they recollect ed where they were and resumed their former gait.

That little incident was not lost to Mark's sharp eyes, however. He turned and nudged Dewey on the arm.

"Did you see that, old man?" he cried.

"Yes, b'gee, I did," responded Dewey, "and I know what it means, too."

The four were cadets!

Our two friends fairly gasped with delight as they realized that. The strangers had disappeared in the tent by that time and quick as a wink Mark sprang forward.

"Let's see who they are," he cried.

The two hurried up to the tent door and peered cautiously around the edge of the canvas. They could plainly see the backs of the others as they strolled away. An instant later Mark started back with a cry of delight. One of the four had turned around and shown his face for one instant. It was Bull Harris! And the rest were his "gang!"

Mark and Dewey stole away to a safe corner and sat down to consult. Of course there was but one thought in the minds of both of them. It was a chance for a joke, a superb one. Bull was in disguise, and would run for his life at the least suspicion of discovery. It was a golden opportunity, and such a one must

not be allowed to pass for anything in the world.

The reader of course understands what were Mark Mallory's feelings toward Bull Harris, the yearling. Bull was Mark's deadliest enemy in West Point; Bull hated him with a concentrated hatred that had grown with each unsuccessful attempt to outwit Mark, to disgrace him, to get him expelled. As for Mark, he did not hate Bull, but he loved to worry that ill-natured and malignant youth with all kinds of clever schemes.

That was the reason why, the very instant Mark recognized the yearling, the thought flashed over him—what a chance for some fun.

"We mustn't let him see us," Mark whispered to Dewey. "He'd recognize us in spite of our disguise. What shall we do?"

"Let's go in and follow them," chuckled Dewey. "See what they're doing, b'gee!"

This suggestion was acted upon instantly. The two conspirators got up and stole over to the tent door, slid in, and dodged behind one of the wagons.

It was a very small tent, and they could almost have touched their victims with an umbrella. Yet the victims had not the least suspicion of any danger.

"They are feeding the elephant," whispered Mark. "Ssh!"

Bull and his three friends had their pockets stuffed with peanuts and were amusing themselves immensely. The single elephant was chained to the back of the tent; there was a small railing in front of him to keep people from going too near. That did not prevent them from throwing peanuts, however. It is a lot of fun to get a big elephant to raise his trunk in eager expectation and then to torment him by not giving him anything to eat. It is fun at any rate if you like to tease; Bull liked to, and the madder the elephant got the better he liked it.

An elephant is a peculiarly intelligent-looking animal. He can indicate his feelings very well with those twinkling little eyes of his. And the two conspirators chuckled as they noticed the way the animal was regarding his four tormentors. And then suddenly Dewey chancing to

put one hand in his pocket, gave a gasp of delight.

"By jingo!" he cried. "I've got it!"

Mark stared at him in surprise as he drew forth from his pocket a small bottle of whitish substance.

"What is it?" he inquired, whispering low.

"Something I got for the Parson," chuckled Dewey. "It's caustic potash! Watch."

Dewey took the cork out of the innocent little bottle and sprang out from behind the wagon. It was all done so quickly that Mark scarcely had time to realize what was up.

There was no one else in the tent to see; the four were too intent upon their fun. Dewey crept up behind them, and with as much deftness as if he had been a pickpocket, dumped the contents of the bottle into Bull's "peanut" pocket.

A moment more and the excitement began.

Bull did not notice the substance when he reached for another peanut. He took it out and deftly "chucked" it into the elephant's mouth.

Concerning the action of caustic potash when moistened there is no room to write a treatise here. If Parson Stanard had been there he would doubtless have explained how the latent heat of the substance is released by decomposition, etc., a process known as "slaking," and so on. Suffice it to say that it gets hot, so hot that a Hades with "all modern improvements" would undoubtedly substitute caustic potash for fire and brimstone.

Bull noticed the elephant look funny, he didn't know why. There was a pail of water at the infuriated animal's side, and he thrust his trunk into it and drank a huge draught to relieve the pain.

And then he raised as trunk, full of water as it was, and to Bull's horror and consternation, deliberately blew a heavy column of it straight into his tormentor's face!

CHAPTER IV.

BULL HARRIS BEATS A RETREAT.

The scene that resulted is left to the reader's imagination. Bull was simply drenched; he was sputtering and gasping

with rage. As for the elephant, he set up a terrific trumpeting, which, together with the cries of the cadets brought the circus attendants in on a run.

(It is needless to say that Mark and Dewey had fled long ago, ready to burst with hilarity.)

The circus men had expected some danger from the cries they heard. When they discovered what was really the matter they broke into roars of laughter, for they were only human. That made Bull all the madder.

"You shall pay for this!" he shouted furiously. "Why don't you keep that beast where he can't hurt anything?"

"What made you tease him?" retorted one of the others, shrewdly suspecting that the meek old elephant's act was not uncaused.

"I wasn't teasing him!" roared Bull. "You lie if you——"

Bull was red with rage, but he turned a little pale as one of the men sprang toward him.

"Shut up!" said he, "or I'll dump you in the rest of that water and roll you in the mud besides."

It was at least half an hour before Mark and Dewey managed to recover. The whole affair was so utterly ludicrous! Such a tale it would make to tell the rest of the Seven!

"Gee whiz!" cried Mark, suddenly. "I forgot all about that. Let's hustle over and tell 'em now."

"B'gee, that's so," cried Dewey. "I never thought of it, either. Reminds me of a story I once heard, b'gee——"

That was a very funny story; it was one of Dewey's very best, and I wish that I could repeat it. The only trouble was that it was never finished. For, standing where they were, near the menagerie tent again, they heard two voices in conversation. What they heard completely drove from Dewey's mind all thoughts of jokes and stories. It suggested a prospect of sport that knocked all previous adventures into the shade.

This was the conversation:

"Mike drunk! For Heaven's sakes, man! That's the second time this week. How on earth will we ever do without him?"

The voice was that of the proprietor,

all his anger at his treatment by Texas having left him at what was evidently some bad news.

"We'll have to miss showing the dime museum tent again!" he groaned. "And it'll mean five dollars out of my pocket, after I've just lost a twenty, too! Confound it!"

"Can't you get somebody to take his place?" inquired another voice.

"No! How can I? I couldn't do it myself, for I can't remember half the jokes and things Mike used to get off in his speech when he exhibited the freaks. He kept the people laughing and they never saw how rotten the confounded exhibition is. And now what on earth am I to do?"

This dialogue was not meant for Mark and Dewey, but they heard it in passing. Now they were out for fun, bold and daring, both of them. And to each at the same moment those words suggested a wildly delicious idea. They turned and stared at each other with a look of inspiration on their faces; gave one gasp of delight; and then Dewey seized Mark by the shoulders.

"B'gee, old man," he cried, "I dare you!"

An instant later Smithers felt a light tap upon the arm. He turned and confronted a tramp in a torn yellow and red tennis blazer, with hands bound up in rags.

"What the deuce do you want?"

"I was just going to say I'd exhibit your museum freaks for you. I and my friend there."

"You!" gasped the professor. "Who the deuce are you?"

"I'm a professional stump speaker," said the tramp, winking knowingly. "And my friend, here's a professional joke writer. And if you'll just show us the freaks and give us a while to think up jokes, we'll make you famous."

"How much do you want?" inquired Smithers, suspiciously.

"Nothing. We'll do it for love, to get you out of a scrape."

The man gazed at them in doubt for a moment more, and then he turned upon his heel.

"Come," he said, briefly, and led the

way out to the gayly painted tent mentioned previously.

As for the two plebes, they were simply kicking each other for joy. Talk about fun! Gee whiz!

CHAPTER V.

MARK AND DEWEY DELIVER AN ADDRESS.

The four members of the Seven Devils who had stayed behind to see the rest of the show wandered out disconsolately after it was over. Mr. Smithers had previously announced from the ring that the marvelous museum was now on exhibition for the "purely nominal sum of ten cents," also that Professor Salvatori would be on hand to deliver one of his famous addresses, assisted by Mr. So-and-So. Finding that this bait had been taken by most of the crowd, and not knowing what else to do with themselves, since their leader had deserted them, the five strolled into the much painted tent.

They were but little prepared for the amazing sight which greeted them after a few minute's wait. In the first place there were a number of glass cases with little platforms upon which the professor was to mount, and in the second there was a crowd of people wandering about staring curiously. Then suddenly the trumpet blew a blast, and with Mr. Smithers at their head, in strode—good Heavens! Mark and Dewey!

The plebes could hardly believe their eyes; they stared and gasped, and then gasped and stared. They rubbed their eyes and pinched themselves. And meanwhile Professor Salvatori beamed down on them benignly as he stepped lightly up to the platform.

"Durnation!" gasped Texas. "He's a-goin' to make a speech!"

"Bless my soul!" muttered Indian. "What an extraordinary proceeding!"

Meanwhile Mr. Smithers had stepped out upon the platform with his best professional style.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that it gives me the greatest of pleasure to present to you this afternoon my distinguished friends, Professor Salvatori (a bow) and his able and witty assistant. (another). Ladies and gentlemen, Professor Salvatori is so well known to you

all that I am sure it would be a presumption on my part to tell you of his history. The address which he delivered before his royal highness, the Duke of Bavaria, was published in the all leading scientific reviews of the day, and I am sure was appreciated by you all. It was during his remarkable trip though the wilds of Central Africa that most of these extraordinary specimens were collected, notably that magnificent painting of a Polar bear devouring a walrus which you doubtless observed upon the outside of the tent. Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you you have a treat in store. Listen, all of you. Professor Salvatori."

During this most original and startling introduction, Professor Salvatori had been bowing right and left, and the four devils had been staring their eyes out. In the midst of it the fun-loving Texas seized the others and drew them to one side.

"Fellers," he whispered, "Mark's a-goin' to make a speech. He didn't tell us. Let's git square."

"How?"

"Let's guy him! Durnation!"

And in half a second more those four rascals had vowed to bust up that speech. Truly there was fun in store when once Professor Salvatori got started, and the conspirators fairly danced about with impatience.

Professor Salvatori meanwhile had not been hesitating, but with a jaunty stride had stepped to the fore. He wasn't the least bit embarrassed. Why should a man who had lectured before the Duke of Bavaria care for country bumpkins like these? He wiped his brow with a graceful flourish and cleared his throat pomposly.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he.

That was a fine starter and the professor gazed at the crowd as much to say "Could you have done any better?" The devils chuckled.

"After the most embarrassing eulogy which my old friend General Smithers has given me I am sure I need say nothing more about myself to you. It would be presumptuous and therefore—ahem!—I shall proceed immediately to the business in hand. Now then!"

This graceful introduction over the pro-

fessor signaled his assistant in a superior way to lift the curtain of a glass case disclosing the "huge" boa constrictor some five feet long.

"In the words of the poem ladies and gentlemen" said the professor.

"Oh here's your anaconda boa constrictor

Oft called anaconda for brevity.

He's noted the world throughout
For his age and great longevity.

"He can eat himself, crawl through
himself.

And come out of himself with
agility;

He can tie himself up in a double
bow-knot

And undo himself with the greatest
facility."

This masterpiece could not prevent a groan of disgust from the crowd who were disappointed at the size. Texas saw a chance to begin right there.

"Tain't so big as the picture!" he roared and the spectators murmured approvingly.

They thought the bold fellow was out for more fun and they meant to back him up.

"That picture," returned Mark smiling "is the exact size the boa constrictor would have been if he hadn't died some fifty years ago a misfortune for which I cannot be to blame. At present he is stuffed——"

"The whole show's stuffed!"

It was the Parson who said that. Mark stared at the clerical and classical gentlemen until he saw that every one in the crowd was likewise taking in that lank bony form. And then he remarked dryly:

"You'd look a sight better if you were stuffed, too."

That brought down the house and Professor Salvatori knew that he had won the crowd over. He beamed upon his chagrined friends benevolently and went on. He narrated several marvelous tales of his adventures with large snakes in Africa, the province of Farina land. And then Dewey was promptly reminded of one of his yarns, b'gee! which he told in his inimitable way and made everybody laugh.

Then they moved on to the Siamese twins.

"He's dead, too," observed Mark. "He died in jail, poor fellow. He'd committed a crime one-half of him and it was quite a problem how to keep in jail without keeping the other one in too. He had committed a horrible crime——"

"What was it?" cried Indian innocently.

"Bigamy," said Mark calmly. "He'd been leading a double life."

By this time things were progressing with delightful smoothness. The crowd was in a good humor laughing at everything. When you once get people in a laughing mood they do that. Mr.—er—General Smithers was beaming serenely thinking of offering a permanent job to these two quick-witted unfortunates.

And in the meantime they were still talking.

"And now we come to the India-rubber man," said Mark. "A little of this India-rubber man goes a very long way and therefore I shall move on to this next curious and most interesting specimen, the man with the iron jaw. He is indeed worthy of notice."

Texas and his mischievous friends ventured yet one more effort then.

"Where's the iron jaw?" they shouted all in a breath.

"Where's the jaw!" echoed Mark indignantly. "Why don't you use your eyes and see? It's lying right there in his lap for you to look at."

The crowd roared with delight at that; sure enough the man held up a bit of rusty iron in the shape of a human jaw. As for Texas he started back and stared about him in bewilderment.

And then suddenly came a most amazing development. The spectators could put but one construction upon it; the savage Texan was enraged at having been laughed at.

With a muttered exclamation he leaped forward, sprang at a bound to the plat-

form and rushing at Professor Salvatori dealt him a blow upon the face!

There was the wildest confusion in a moment. The crowd hissed and shouted indignantly. Smithers rushed forward. The rest of the Seven Devils gasped. As for Mark he started back white as a sheet with anger.

"Why Texas!" he cried in an amazed whisper.

"You chump!" muttered Texas under his breath. "Don't you understand? Fly for your life! Chase me!"

Mark gazed about him in bewilderment; an instant later he caught sight of something that told him all. Just entering the door of the tent a lady leaning upon his arm was a blue uniformed figure a tactical officer Lieutenant Allen! And quick as a flash Mark saw the ruse and with a cry of mock rage made a savage leap at Texas.

Texas sprang to the ground Mark at his heels and carefully looking away from the distant "tac." Texas plunged through the crowd Mark following at full tilt and shouting for vengeance. Texas slid under the tent wall Mark after him and then Dewey and the other plebes in full hue and cry. A minute more and they were flying across lots to the shelter of the woods, General Smithers all his patrons and in fact all Highland Falls gazing at their flying figures in amazement.

"A lunatic asylum broke loose," was the ultimate verdict.

The Seven Devils once in the woods and alone, seated themselves on the ground and stared at each other and roared with laughter for an hour.

Then they slipped back to camp fully satisfied with the fun they had experienced that day.

[THE END.]

Lieutenant Frederick Garrison's next novelette on cadet life at West Point will be entitled, "A Midnight Visit; or, Mark Mallory's Escapade," Army and Navy No. 32.



A DISASTROUS MISTAKE.

A STORY OF
THE HIMALYAS.

By HORATIO G. COLE.



"CRACK!" WENT THE ROPE ALMOST IN THE CENTER.



RE you ready? Don't shut your eyes, boy; there's no danger. You're well tied in and the ropes are new. Now, off you go! One, two—hi! you niggers, pull! Pull, confound you! Don't you see the sahib's ready to cross?"

The collyies pulled, the rope tightened. I slipped off the friendly precipice, and the next moment was dangling from the rope they called a bridge, with a rushing, roaring, leaping, foaming torrent of water in the ravine below me, and the clear, sunny sky overhead.

I shut my eyes, but my imagination was lively. I knew that if the rope from which I dangled should break, or the frail cradle in which I sat should slip, no human aid could succor me; and at every jerk of the rope and every forward movement of the cradle I was prepared for the worst!

However, I arrived safely on the opposite cliff, and by the time that Guy, who sang through the journey, and my uncle, who was groaning over his rheumatism, joined me I had regained my composure.

We left the coolies by the rope bridge, my uncle threatening dread pains and penalties if they lost sight of it before our return, and continued our tramp up the Himalayas to where, in the shade of the deepest and oldest of pine-forests, lived a lonely old Pahari, famed far and wide for an oil he extracted from the

pines, said to be an infallible remedy for rheumatism.

It was to get a supply of that oil my uncle had undertaken the three days' march from his opium fields, and, the bargain effected, we left the forest in some haste, hoping to reach our camp—pitched some distance from the ravine we had just crossed—before sunfall.

"But we must take a short cut back," said my uncle; "I had no idea it was so late."

"Of course, you know all the mountain paths hereabouts?" I asked.

"Well," he demurred, "not exactly all; but I've been up for a supply of oil before to-day."

But we walked, and slid, and climbed, and, despite my uncle's local knowledge, did not reach the ravine and the rope bridge until the day was about to shut in.

"Where are the coolies?"

There, sure enough, was the rope bridge, dangling limply across the boiling chasm, but never a nigger was visible—never a human being, black, white or yellow.

"Where can the fellows have gone?" exclaimed my uncle.

"Back to camp?" I queried. "We are so late they thought we were staying in the forest for the night."

"They dared not, after my definite instructions. You heard my threats? They dare not openly disregard them, I repeat—"

My uncle was beside himself with anger.

"But they are not here," I interrupted.

"They're across the river, I guess," added my uncle. "A bear came along and frightened them. I'll shout!"

He shouted for five minutes, and his voice rang and echoed from mountain to mountain—and that was all. When the shouting ceased the rushing torrent roared along as before.

"The night will be here soon," said Guy. "We'll have to camp where we are."

My uncle turned quite savagely upon him.

"Look at the mists rising! Camp out in the wet like this, without a cover—without even a sack to lie on? What about my rheumatism? Are you longing to see me turned into a helpless cripple?"

"Then we must retrace our steps and get back into the forest," said Guy.

"You may, if you don't value your life," spluttered my uncle. "The path, I suppose, wasn't difficult enough to find in broad daylight? Oh, go and tumble over a precipice in the darkness, if you like that sort of thing. I don't suppose the bears will eat you with less relish because you're dashed to fragments."

Guy smiled, but I felt the hopelessness of our position almost as much as my uncle. I examined the rope that stretched from precipice to precipice, a distance of less than eighty feet. It was of tolerable thickness for a grass rope, and though it looked dirty and weather-beaten I knew that it was new that very day. Upon it hung the cradle, in which we had been pulled across, and upon the path was coiled the long rope by which the coolies had pulled us.

"Uncle," said Guy, "I can cross that rope, hanging by hands and legs, monkey-fashion."

"And what then?"

"I can pull Bob across in the cradle. Then Bob and I can pull you across. I'll go at once, before it gets darker."

I glanced at the torrent, swollen with the snows that were melting high in the mountain passes, whirling and boiling as it dashed over the half sunken rocks, shrieking and defiantly laughing as it threw the wet spray into our faces—and I thought of Guy's suggestion and shivered.

"Guy," said my uncle, "you want to try what it takes a bold hillman to do. You mustn't think of it."

"But I've crawled along a clothes line in the drying fields back of our school hundreds of times and never fallen!" expostulated Guy. "And this rope's exactly like a clothes line, only thicker."

"I can't let you try it," repeated my uncle.

"But I've crawled along a hundred and twenty feet of clothes line at home, uncle, and never come to grief. You see how easily I can do it!"

To my horror Guy slid down the rope, and hanging back downwards, by hands and legs, quickly began to pull himself along hand over hand. I dared hardly breathe. My uncle steadied his shaking hand upon my trembling shoulder. But Guy was going quite easily. After all, I had seen him do the same thing at home scores of times. Only at home a flooring of grass lay beneath him, while here—

"Crack!" went the rope—almost in the center. I shrieked. Guy was struggling in the foaming water.

"Help us, somebody!" cried my uncle. "He's gone! He's drowned! He can't live two minutes in that seething turmoil."

"But he's got hold of the broken rope, uncle! Look! He's clinging to it."

So it was. Guy had held fast to the rope when it broke and was now, by its aid, keeping his head above the leaping river, yet otherwise helpless as a cork. In an instant my uncle snatched up the loose rope from the path and began to fling it in the direction of Guy's bobbing figure.

A dozen times he threw the rope and almost every time it fell within Guy's grasp, if it did not actually strike him in its descent. Yet Guy made no effort to clutch at it. Only, it seemed to me, he held more firmly to the rope with which he had fallen.

"He's half silly," wailed my uncle. "The fall's knocked the senses out of him. Bob, you must go and help him. The current runs across the ravine. Tie this rope round your waist—"

I apprehended my uncle's meaning. In less than a minute I had the rope under my arms, and, leaping into the water, was being swept with the current across

to the other bank, against which Guy was being helplessly beaten.

My fear had suddenly left me, and, being an expert swimmer, I kept my senses, and, making a dash at Guy's rope at the vital moment, swung beside him.

"I've got a rope here," I shouted—for the river howled like a demon possessed; "catch hold of it, Guy, and leave go of yours. Uncle will tow us up."

It was almost dark. I felt Guy's hand searching aimlessly for the rope, and I guided it until I felt that he had gripped it where it passed around my body; then I persuaded him to relinquish his grasp of the other rope, and gave uncle the signal.

"Right! Pull away!"

The words were in my mouth when—presto!—the little light vanished altogether, my nostrils and ears sang with filling water, and I knew that I had gone under.

I struck out wildly, hopelessly, with both hands, and came to the surface. Guy was still clinging to my waist.

"The rope's broken!" he sputtered. "It's good-by now, Bob."

Automatically I continued to swim—that is, I struck out with legs and arms, so that we floated with the river. But how long would it last? How long could the strongest swimmer live in such a boiling, rushing water? How soon should we amateurs go under?

The river served us as it pleased. Now we soared to the crest of a broken wave; then we fell, with splash and sputter, into its trough.

I knew not how far we were from the bridge—I know that I was vaguely wondering if that river ran ultimately into the Ganges, and if the crocodiles would make a meal of us—when the river suddenly swept us round a projecting cliff, and across the water there fell a blaze of light that almost blinded me, yet made me shriek for joy.

"A bonfire!" shouted Guy.

"Cooles! A bridge! Help! help!" I cried.

We joined voices. The light was so close, the stream running so swiftly, we might—horrible thought!—be swept by before assistance could be offered.

But our shouts were lusty, and, what was more to our advantage, the coolies were watching the river. They stirred their wood fires.

"They've seen us!" we cried together. "Look! They've got ropes ready. Look out! If we miss those ropes—"

The possibility was too dreadful for utterance. Fortunately, the ropes were plentiful. In my anxiety I caught hold of two—one in each hand—and while I held on, struggling against the sweep of the river, I heard Guy's cry of relief, and knew that he, too, had been fortunate.

We were soon landed, like fish from the end of a line, and stood looking upon the amazed and frightened faces of my uncle's coolies.

"The sahib!" they cried. "Where is the sahib?"

"It's not your fault my uncle is not drowned," I said with as much anger as I could muster in my semi-drowned condition. "And you'll know it when you meet him again, I'll warrant. Why did you leave the bridge?"

"Leave the bridge?" they repeated in amazement. "Cooles no leave bridge. Stop here all time. Truth, sahib! We no leave bridge."

They were most emphatic in their denials, offering to become food for dogs if we could prove that they had left the bridge during our absence. Their sincerity was so obvious that I was nonplussed until, after a time, Guy came to the rescue.

"Don't ask any more questions, Bob," he said in an undertone. "It strikes me that uncle's to blame. He took a short cut back from the forest, if you remember, and it's my opinion that he lost the way. Only don't let on to these niggers. This is certainly the rope bridge we crossed over this morning."

And the other bridge, a little higher up—the rotten one that had so nearly ended in disaster—was thrown across a spot where the precipices on either side were almost identical in appearance with those which flanked the ravine where we had crossed that morning. Only, as we learned later, the former had been condemned, since frequent landslips had occurred there, which had resulted in the second rope bridge being constructed within a short distance of the first, but hidden by projecting cliffs.

A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH;

or,

HOW RUFUS RODMAN WON SUCCESS.

By ARTHUR LEE PUTNAM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES RUFE RODMAN.



MASH your baggage, sir?"

Our story opens in front of the Grand Central Depot on Forty-Second street, and the speaker was a bright-faced boy of fifteen, arrayed in a suit which had seen its best days long since. The person addressed was a nervous elderly gentleman, who had just emerged from the depot, carrying in his hand a valise of medium size.

He eyed the boy with a wondering look, as he replied: "Why should I want my baggage smashed? I can smash it myself if I want it done."

"It ain't fit work for a gentleman like you."

"Nor for anybody else, in my opinion. Is that your business?" continued the elderly gentleman.

"Yes, sir, I'm a baggage smasher—professionally."

"It's a queer business, on my word. How do you make it pay?"

"The gentleman as has his baggage smashed pays me."

"Why, I'd as soon pay you for sitting on my hat."

"I'll do that cheap," said the boy, with a laugh. "But I guess you don't know what smashin' baggage is."

"I thought I did. But perhaps I am mistaken."

"It's just carrying it for you wherever you want to go."

"Oh, that's it!" said the gentleman in a tone of relief. "That sounds better. If you had talked English I would have understood you sooner. Well, you can carry my valise if you want to."

"All right, sir. Where am I to carry it?"

"To the Park Avenue Hotel, I think. That's a good hotel, isn't it?"

"First class."

"Is it far off?"

"It is about ten blocks—half a mile. Will you take the car or walk?"

"I will walk. I have been cramped up so long in the cars that it will rest me to stretch my legs."

"Very well, sir. We'll walk along Park Avenue. The cars go through the tunnel."

"New York has changed a good deal since I was here, nearly fifteen years since."

"I don't remember how it looked then. I was only a baby."

"So I suppose. What is your name?"

"Rufus Rodman. The boys call me Rufe for short."

"And you make a living by smashing baggage?"

"Yes, sir, but I can't get steady work at that. Sometimes I sell papers."

"And where do you live?"

"Sometimes I bunk at the Newsboys' Lodging House, but just at present I'm residin' with a friend of mine on Sixteenth street, near Avenue A. We goes shares, Micky and I. It costs us each fifty cents a week."

"I suppose I shall have to pay more than that at the Park Avenue Hotel," said the traveler with a smile.

"I don't know exactly what they charge, for I haven't boarded there lately. Micky and I prefer a private residence."

"Who's Micky?"

"Micky Flynn is his whole name. He is a paper merchant, and a boot and shoe artist."

"In other words a newsboy and bootblack."

"That's what some folks call him, but Micky is high-toned, for his great grandfather was King of Cork, so Micky says."

"I am glad you keep such distinguished company. What building is that?"

"That's the Park Avenue Hotel."

"My destination. You may give me the valise now. What do you expect for your services?"

"The expenses of livin' is so great that I shall have to charge you fifteen cents."

"You are a character. Here's a quarter."

"Thank you, sir. You're a gentleman, every inch of you."

"Suppose I had only given you a nickel—what would you have said then?"

"That you was very absent-minded," answered Rufus with a comical look.

"That would be a charitable view to take. Good-bye, Rufus, and good luck."

"Thank you, sir. The same to you. I'll have a good supper to celebrate my birthday."

"Is this your birthday?"

"Yes, sir; I am fifteen years old to-day."

"Do you expect any birthday presents?"

"No, sir; I have had no birthday presents since my mother died," the boy answered soberly.

"When did your mother die?" asked the gentleman in a tone of sympathy.

"When I was eleven years old."

"And you have taken care of yourself ever since?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever gone hungry?"

"Yes, sir, lots of times; but I don't mind it much. Sometimes I've had to make my supper of an apple. Apples is fillin' but they don't warm a feller up like coffee and beefsteak."

"No, I should think not. Well, Rufus, I want you to have a good birthday dinner this time. Invite your friend Micky to join you. Here is a dollar. Will that do?"

"Yes, sir. We'll have a big blow out, Micky and me."

"Will you go to Delmonico's?" asked Mr. Chadwick, with a smile.

"No, Delmonico's is gettin' common. Besides our dress suits are laid away for the season, and we can't put on no frills."

"You must select some place where you can get a good dinner."

"Thank you, sir; you're very kind. If you was livin' in the city I'd have a birthday every week."

"That would be too expensive for me."

Here a hotel porter made his appearance, and Rufus and his patron parted.

The young baggage smasher took out the silver dollar and the quarter and regarded them with much satisfaction.

"I mustn't let the tax collector see them," he said to himself, "or he'd put me on the list with Astor and Vanderbilt. You're in luck, Rufe Rodman, but you can stand it. Now I must hunt up Micky, and invite him to the banquet."

Rufus kept on his way down Fourth Avenue, of which Park Avenue is really a part, and at the corner

of Twenty-Third street, alongside of the Young Men's Christian Association building, he met his room-mate, Micky Flynn. Micky was a freckled faced boy, younger and a little shorter than Rufus, whose distinguishing characteristic was a head of flaming red hair. He had half a dozen Telegrams under his arm, for which he was seeking purchasers.

"Hallo, Micky!" said Rufus. "What luck have you had to-day?"

"O, it's you, Rufe," said Micky, wheeling round. "Faith, it's mighty bad luck I've had to-day. I've only made twenty-three cents, and I'm stuck on six Telegrams. I never see them go so poor."

"Here, give me half, and I'll go across the street. What's the news?"

"I don't see none, except there was a dog run over on the Erie road. That ain't of no account."

"Give me another paper. I'll sell 'em on that. The fact is, Micky, you ain't enterprisin'."

Rufus went across the way, and began to cry:

"Great railroad accident. Terrific loss of life!"

Now this was rather a questionable proceeding on Rufe Rodman's part, and we do not mean to commend or even excuse it. Still, some allowance may well be made for a motherless boy, whose education had been picked up in the streets of the great city. Do not judge Rufe too severely, reader; he had a good heart, though he may have acted thoughtlessly at times.

The bait took. The papers sold off in ten minutes. The last purchaser was a stout, choleric-looking man, who at once opened the paper and began to look for the details of the accident, but in vain.

"I say, boy!" he cried. "I don't see anything about the accident."

Rufus took the paper, and pointed to a four-line item in an obscure part of the paper. The choleric man became angry.

"You're a swindler, boy," he shouted. "There's no terrific loss of life. There was only a dog killed."

"It was terrific—for the dog," said Rufus, demurely.

The man laughed and passed on, his wrath appeased.

A nervous looking maiden lady, who had caught the boy's startling announcement, asked, "Have you no more papers?"

"No, ma'am, but my friend across the street can accommodate you."

The lady hurried over.

"Here, boy," she said to Micky, who had not sold either of his papers, "give me a paper, quick. I've got a cousin living near some railroad, and maybe he was in the accident. I'll take both papers—Sarah Ann will want one."

Micky with great satisfaction pocketed the four cents.

"Now show me where it tells about the accident."

Micky pointed out the paragraph with some misgivings, but to his relief the lady said: "I can't read it till I get home, for I haven't got my spectacles with me. I shan't know till then whether its my poor cousin that's killed or not."

As she hurried away, Rufus said with a laugh, "I don't think she'll be willing to own the dog for a cousin."

"Maybe she'll be disappointed," said Micky, shrewdly. "I say, Rufe, that was a bully idea of yours. I never thought of it."

"Folks most generally like to read about accidents, Micky. Any way, they'll get the worth of their money. And now, Micky, I'm goin' to surprise you. I'm goin' to give a big supper to-night to celebrate my birthday, and you're invited."

"I'm with you," said Micky, enthusiastically. "I haven't eaten anything since mornin'."

CHAPTER II.

A BIRTHDAY DINNER.

Rufus and his roommate were not, in general, fastidious as to the restaurant which they patronized. When they were in the lower part of the city they frequented restaurants where they could get a square meal, including tea or coffee, a plate of meat and a piece of pie, with a fair supply of bread and butter, for fifteen cents. Those who patronize Delmonico's or the Brunswick may be surprised that so small a sum should purchase so large a supply of food; but it is fortunate for those of very limited means that such restaurants exist.

It must be admitted that both Rufus and Micky looked healthy and well fed. With them quantity was more important than quality.

But Rufus had no intention of patronizing his usual restaurants on his birthday. There was a more pretentious and higher priced dining-saloon not far from Grand street, upon which he fixed his choice. When he announced his decision to Micky, the latter was almost incredulous.

"You ain't goin' to play no game on the restaurant?" he said inquiringly.

"Of course I ain't. What do you take me for?"

"Have you got money enough to pay for two meals?"

"Look at that!" said Rufus displaying a silver dollar.

"Where'd you get it?"

"A gentleman up at the Grand Central Depot gave it to me for a birthday supper. He told me to invite you."

"How did he know me?" asked Micky, grateful but also surprised.

"I told him about you. He said he was glad I kept such good company. 'Invite your friend, Mr. Flynn, to dine with you,' says he."

"Did he really say that?" asked Micky, a flush of pride mantling his cheek.

"To be sure. I just wish I had a birthday every week."

"So do I, Rufe."

It was a considerable walk for the boys to the restaurant where they proposed to regale themselves, but they did not feel the fatigue with such a prospect before them.

"Come in, Micky," said Rufus, when they reached the portals of the aristocratic cafe.

"Maybe they won't let us in."

"Don't you be afraid. Follow me!"

With an air of importance, and the comfortable feeling induced by his unusual wealth, Rufus led the way, and seated himself at a small side table, motioning Micky to sit opposite.

A waiter approached and eyed the boys doubtfully.

"Give me some roast turkey, and my friend some roast beef, with coffee for both."

"I suppose you've got money enough to pay the bill?"

"Don't you worry about that, young man—I'm solid, I am."

"All right! You can have all you can pay for."

"Don't mind our cloe's. We're Eyetalian noblemen in disguise."

"You're pretty well disguised," said the waiter, with a smile.

There was a shade of dissatisfaction on Micky's face when the waiter left to fill the order.

"Why didn't you order roast turkey for me, Rufe?" he said. "I didn't eat any since last Thanksgiving, when us boys had a dinner at the Lodging House."

"I'll tell you why, Micky. Two plates would cost too much. I'll give you half of my turkey, and you can give me half your roast beef, so we'll have two kinds of meat, and there's money enough for pie, too."

"That's all right, Rufe!" said Micky, in a tone of satisfaction.

The viands were brought, and the two boys lost no time in attacking them. It is needless to say that not a particle was left, and the dishwasher had an easy time with the plates.

"I wish I could eat like that every day," said Micky, with a sigh of profound satisfaction.

"We haven't made our fortunes yet, Micky."

"I don't think we ever will."

"I mean to be top of the heap sometime. Lots of poor boys get rich in New York. Why can't we?"

"Well, I'd like to have it hurry up. I've only made twenty-three cents to-day. That don't look much like a fortune."

"No more it does, but something'll turn up if we wait long enough. I say, Micky, look here!"

With a backward movement of the thumb, Rufe directed the attention of his friend to a table about ten feet away, at which were seated two men, one a well-dressed young man with a mustache, and rather a dudish look; the other a man of fifty, roughly dressed, with shaggy hair, and the general look of a man unused to metropolitan life. The young man was evidently paying him marked attention, and trying to produce a favorable impression.

"I see; what of it?" said Micky.
"Don't you know that young feller?"

"No. Do you?"

Rufus lowered his voice to a half whisper.

"He's a confidence man," he answered. "He's tryin' to rope the other feller in."

"How do you know?"

"I've seen him at his game before. Let's listen, but don't let him know we are doin' it."

"My friend," said the young man, glibly, "I've taken a fancy to you. You look like a smart, enterprising man, with his heart in the right place."

"Much obliged, I'm sure," returned the other, with a smirk of complacency. "I ain't a bit vain, but the folks up our way have a poooty good opinion of me."

"Of course they have. I don't need anybody to tell me. You ought to be in the legislature—perhaps you are."

"Well, I haven't been yet, but some of my friends think of runnin' me for it next year."

"I hope they will. You're got a large amount of practical good sense. I don't think it would be easy to take you in."

"I don't know. I've heard there are some dreadful smart rascals in New York."

"So there are, but they are too smart to make up to a man like you. They can see that you are not to be taken in."

"I guess you're right," said the countryman, his face glowing with pleasure, for he relished flattery, as who does not?

"You did right in coming to New York, though. There are chances of making money here that you can't find in the country. Why last week I made five hundred and seventy-five dollars in a speculation, though I don't pretend to be smart."

"You did?" ejaculated the countryman eagerly.

"Certainly."

"Are there many such chances?" was the anxious inquiry.

"Yes, for those who are smart enough to avail themselves of them."

"I'd like to make five hundred and seventy-five dollars."

"No doubt you would. Of course it is necessary to have some money to speculate with. If you had two or three hundred dollars now—"

"I have."

"Have you it with you in the city?"

"Yes."

"Then I can put you in the way of making three dollars for one."

"Will it take long?"

"Only a few days."

"I'd like to talk this matter over with you. If you'll give me a chance to make that money, I won't mind givin' you—five dollars?"

A smile flitted over the young man's face, but his country friend did not see it.

"I won't charge you anything," he said, "I'll do it out of friendship. We'll adjourn to your hotel and talk the matter over."

The two men rose, and the young man paid the bill.

"Come quick, Micky!" whispered Rufus. "I'm goin' to foller them fellers."

CHAPTER III.

AN ARTFUL SCHEME.

"Where are you staying?" asked the young man, as he and his new acquaintance emerged from the restaurant.

"At the Norfolk Hotel."

"A very good place. I'll go round there with you and tell you about my plan for making money."

"All right," said the old man. "That'll suit me."

They crossed the street, and a short walk brought them to the hotel already mentioned.

"We can sit in the readin' room," said the old man.

"Better go up to your own room, where we can be quiet. I don't want any one to hear what I am going to say to you. I give you a chance because I have taken a liking to you, and because you look so much like an uncle of mine who was drowned at sea. Poor Uncle James! he was the best looking of the family," continued the young man with a gentle sigh.

He certainly understood the delicate art of flattery, and was fast winning the favor of his companion.

"May be you're right," said the latter. "We'll step upstairs."

The room was a small one on the third floor back, the young man took a seat on the bed, and proceeded to business.

"First of all," he said, "I really ought to tell you who I am. My name is Leonard Wilton. My brother and I are commission merchants down town. Father left us boys pretty comfortable. He divided his fortune of three hundred thousand dollars between us."

"You don't say!" ejaculated the old man very much impressed. "Then you are worth a hundred and fifty thousand dollars?"

"More for I have invested my money advantageously."

"The richest man in our town—Greenville, New Hampshire—is only worth thirty thousand dollars."

"I dare say. He'd be a poor man in New York."

"Gosh! I wonder what he'd say to that. Why he struts round as if he owned the whole town."

"My dear sir—by the way you haven't mentioned your name."

"Joshua Beckwith. I'm fifty-nine years old, and I was born in Greenville, and so was my father and grandfather before me."

"I can easily believe it," said the young man in a tone the significance of which Mr. Beckwith did not understand. "Are you a lawyer?"

"Gosh, no! What made you think that?"

"There is a sharp, acute expression in your face which led me to think you might be. Pity you wasn't a lawyer. You would have made a smart one."

"I dunno about that," said Mr. Beckwith, well pleased with the compliment. "I'm afraid you set me too high."

"No, I don't. I'm a judge of human nature if I am nothing else. I have traveled and seen the world, and I cannot be mistaken. You are about as sharp as they make 'em."

"Well, I don't know but you're right. Folks don't often get ahead of me, if I do say it myself."

"Why shouldn't you say it? But I must come to business."

"Yes, that's the talk. You was goin' to show me how I could make five hundred and seventy-five dollars."

"More or less."

"Just so."

Wilton got up and closed the open transom over the door.

"I don't want to be heard outside," he said. "I don't want to give away the scheme to any one else."

"You're right there. I'm sharp enough to understand that," said the old man, complacently.

"Of course you are, Mr. Beckwith. Now, before I begin I want to caution you to keep this thing to yourself. We'll work together and keep the profits to ourselves."

"And you really think you can put me in a way to make five or six hundred dollars?"

"Think? I know I can. I believe you said you had a small sum of money with you?"

"Yes, I've got an order on a banker here for two hundred and fifty dollars."

Leonard Wilton looked rather disappointed.

"Then you haven't the money here in bills?" he said.

"No, but I can get it all to-morrow."

"Well, perhaps that will do. Now let me ask you whether you ever heard of green goods."

"Green goods!" repeated Joshua Beckwith, with a blank look. "My wife's got a dress of green calico, but—"

"Not at all what I mean, my dear sir. I will show you a specimen."

Leonard Wilton took his wallet from his pocket and drew out a five dollar note.

"Why, that's money!" said the old man in surprise.

"Humph, yes! It answers the purpose of money."

"But isn't it money?"

"Take it, Mr. Beckwith, and see if you can see any difference between it and a United States note."

"Of course not!" answered the old man.

"And yet I can assure you it is not genuine."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, I do."

"But I don't see how any one can tell the difference."

"Not one man in a hundred can—only the experts."

"And so you use it?"

"Of course. You noticed that I paid for our dinner at the restaurant with a two-dollar bill?"

"Yes."

"It was just like this."

"But isn't it 'gin the law?"

"Ah, my dear sir, many things are against the law which are done every day. The fact is, the government officials at Washington print off millions of extra money that they divide up among themselves, and nobody is the wiser. As they are printed from the same plates, that accounts for the very close resemblance, you understand?"

"I—I never heerd the like!" said Joshua Beckwith, in a tone expressive of surprise and bewilderment.

"I dare say not. You were not likely to in Green-ville."

"But I don't see how you get the money."

"Just so. Well, I'll see him to-night, and I think I can get him to do better by you than he does by people generally. I'll promise you a thousand dollars for your money, that's four for one. You can easily calculate what your profits are."

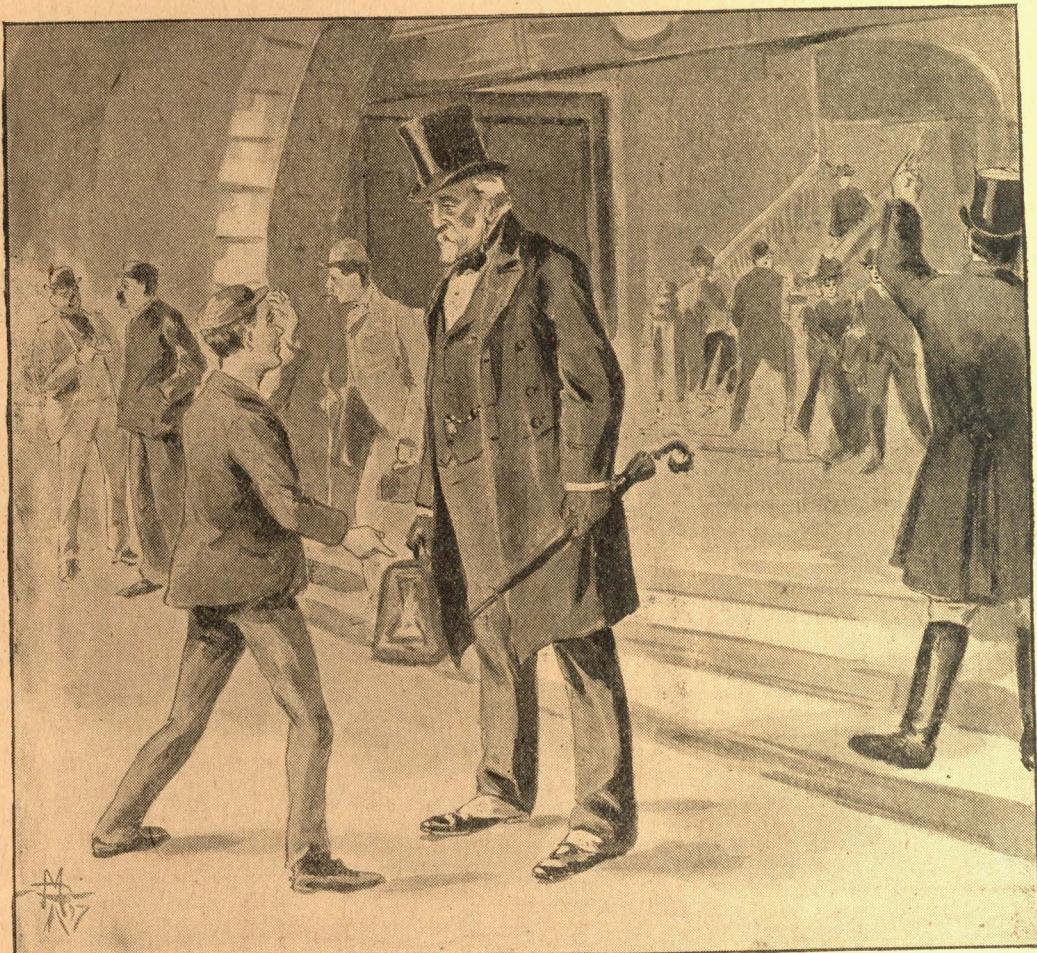
"Seven hundred and fifty dollars!" said the old man.

"Just so. That will pay for your visit to New York, won't it?"

"Mr. Wilton," said Joshua gratefully, "I am very glad I met you. I feel that you are a true friend." I little thought a stranger would do so much for me."

"I have told you that you remind me so much of my dear Uncle James," said Wilton, "you don't seem to me like a stranger. At what time to-morrow can you have the money in case I succeed in my negotiations?"

"Before noon, I guess."



"SMASH YOUR BAGGAGE, SIR?" (page 1469).

"I'll tell you. An intimate friend of mine was once in the Treasury Department. When he retired he managed to secure a set of plates from which he can at any time print off a supply of money. Of course he's well fixed. Why, he's got a country place that cost him fifty thousand dollars, and a house on Madison Avenue that cost twice as much as that, and his income is simply enormous!"

"You don't say! And he hasn't been found out?"

"No, there's no danger. Fact is, the bills are just like the genuine."

"And you can get me some?" asked Mr. Beckwith, eagerly.

"Yes, at thirty cents on a dollar. How much money did you say you had?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars."

"That will do very well. We will meet here. Mind I don't promise you a thousand dollars. Perhaps I shall only be able to get you nine hundred. But even then you will be making six hundred and fifty."

"That will satisfy me, Mr. Wilton. It seems almost too good to be true."

"I must attend to my business and will bid you good-by till then. O, by the way, here is a two-dollar bill. Pay for your supper out of it, and you will see how easily you can pass it."

Leonard Wilton left the hotel laughing in his sleeve at the credulity of his aged dupe. Joshua Beckwith remained behind, indulging in ecstatic dreams of prosperity. He decided to buy his wife a new silk dress, and himself a new overcoat out of the large sum of money he expected to make.

CHAPTER IV.

RUFUS AS A DETECTIVE.

When Leonard Wilton, as he chose to call himself, left the hotel and slowly sauntered up the Bowery, he did not observe two boys, who, while appearing to be looking into a shop window, were really watching him. Indeed he would have regarded a couple of street boys as unworthy his attention.

When he was a block or two away, Rufus said to his companion, "Did you notice how he smiled, Micky? I'm afraid he's got some of the old fellows' money already."

"What are you going to do about it, Rufe?"

"I'm goin' to the hotel to see if I can find him. If I can I'll let him know that a confidence man's got hold of him."

"Do you think he'll pay any attention to a boy like you, Rufe?"

"If he don't it'll be all the worse for him. I don't want to see him robbed."

"Shall I go with you?"

"I guess you'd better stay outside, Micky. It might attract attention if we were both to go in."

Rufus entered the public room of the hotel, and looking about, failed to see the man he was after.

"What's wanted, boy?" asked the clerk.

"There's an old gentleman who came in a little while ago—looks like a countryman. I want to see him."

"I will send up your card. He is in his room."

"All right!" said Rufus.

He took a card, and wrote on it:

"I want to see you on important business."

"Rufus Rodman."

Rufe was not a very good scholar, but he had been to evening school, and he could write a fair hand, and spell better than could have been expected.

A bell boy was sent up with the card.

Considerably surprised, and somewhat flattered to find himself in such request, Mr. Beckwith followed the servant downstairs, and entering the office, looked about him inquiringly.

"Where is Mr. Rodman?" he asked.

Rufus came forward, and took off his hat politely.

"My name is Rufus Rodman," he answered.

"You!" said Joshua in surprise. "Why, you're nothing but a boy!"

"That's true, but I have important business with you."

"Seems to me the boys are very forward in York. What's your business?"

"Can I see you alone?"

Joshua Beckwith looked rather suspiciously at our hero, but it was impossible to distrust his frank, open countenance.

"You can come up to my room if you want to."

Two minutes later he followed Joshua into the room on the third floor.

Rufus at once proceeded to business.

"I saw you a little while ago in an eatin' house with a young man," he commenced.

"Yes, Mr. Wilton."

"I don't know what he calls himself now."

"He calls himself by his name, don't he?" asked Joshua, surprised.

"He's got a good many names. I hope he hasn't got any money from you."

"Why? Isn't he all right?" asked Mr. Beckwith, nervously.

"He's a noted confidence man. I don't know his real name, but he lives by taking in gentlemen from the country. I thought he'd get some of your money."

"He told me he was a commission merchant, and worth a hundred and fifty thousand dollars," said Mr. Beckwith, earnestly.

Rufus laughed.

"He hasn't got any money except what he's swindled people out of," he said. "It's strange he didn't try to swindle you."

"I'm to see him to-morrow. He's goin' to give me a thousand dollars for two hundred and fifty."

"Green goods!" ejaculated Rufus.

"Yes, that's what he calls it."

"It's all a swindle. He would only give you strips of green paper, or a package of sawdust."

"I guess you're mistaken. Here's a specimen of the green goods. He told me I could pass it anywhere."

Joshua Beckwith took from his wallet the two-dollar bill which Wilton had handed to him on going away.

"You can't tell that from a genuine bill," said Beckwith. "Look at it and see."

"There's a good reason why," said Rufus. "It is a genuine bill."

"But how can he afford to give me four good bills for one?" asked Beckwith, who was very reluctant to have his promising speculation nipped in the bud.

"He would only give you a few. The balance would be worthless paper."

"By gosh! he's a regular rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Beckwith energetically, striking the table with his fist. "Why I'd have been ashamed to show my face in Greenville, if he had swindled me, Joshua Beckwith, out of all my money. Such a nice-lookin' man too! Who'd have thought it?"

"Most of the confidence men are nice-looking. If I was nice-lookin' you might suspect me," added Rufus, with a laugh.

"You look like an honest boy, and I'm obliged to you. I'd like to have you come up to Greenville, and pay me a visit. It won't cost you a cent for board."

"Thank you, Mr. Beckwith."

"Now what had I better do?"

"I'll come round this evenin' with a detective and he'll advise you. We'll lay a trap for your friend."

Joshua Beckwith laughed gleefully.

"So he took me for a greenhorn, did he?" he exclaimed. "Maybe he'll find old Joshua Beckwith is sharper than he thought."

"Thank you, Mr. Beckwith, but let us wait and see how it turns out. I want to convince you that I have told you the truth. Will you be in the hotel at eight o'clock this evening?"

"Yes, I'll be here."

"A man will call to see you. He will be an officer, and you can tell him just what you have told me."

"I'll do just as you say. What sort of work do you do?"

"Anythin' that comes handy. Sometimes I carry bundles or valises for gentlemen, sometimes I sell papers, sometimes I go on errands."

"Can you make enough to live that way?"

"Well, sometimes I am hard up, and sometimes I don't get my meals reg'lär; but I'm gettin' older, and I expect to do better when I'm a man."

"If you'll come to Greenville, New Hampshire, and work for me on the farm I'll give you a good home and all you can eat."

Rufus shook his head.

"I don't think I would be contented away from the city, but if I ever get tired of it I'll accept your kind offer."

"Do so. Me and my wife will be glad to see you."

Rufus left the hotel and briefly recounted to Micky what had happened.

"I'm goin' to see a detective I know," he concluded, "and put him on the track of this Wilton. We'll see some fun if I ain't mistaken. Now, let us go 'ome."

It is a considerable distance to Sixteenth street, and Rufus having a part of his dollar over indulged in the extravagance of a ride on the Third Avenue horse cars. The house in which they lived was a four-story brick one and was occupied by several families.

They were only a few steps from the house when a girl of eight came flying from it bareheaded and evidently greatly frightened.

"O Rufie!" she cried almost breathless. "Come quick! Father's come home drunk, and I'm afraid he'll kill mother and the baby."

Rufus and Micky set out on a run. They hurried upstairs and into the second floor front room occupied by little Ruth's family. They were none too soon.

Crouching behind a table with an infant in her arms, her countenance showing the terror she felt, was Ruth's mother, while on the other side of the table, his face inflamed with drink, stood a stout broad-shouldered man, with a chair uplifted, threatening to bring it down on his wife's head. In one corner of the room was a bedstead. A kitchen stove and a few necessary articles made up the scanty list of furniture.

As Rufus burst into the apartment, the drunkard paused with the chair uplifted and demanded roughly:

"What do you want here young 'un?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE TREASURE OF ISORA;

OR,

The Giant Islanders of Tiburon.

BY BROOKS McCORMICK,

Author of "How He Won," Etc., Etc.

(Copyrighted, American Publishers' Corporation).

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CHAPTER VI.

A TREACHEROUS FRIEND.

HEN the schooner has sailed without me!" exclaimed Livy Wooster, as soon as he could get a chance to speak, for Captain Ridgefield and Landy had done all the talking after the astounding discovery that Captain Wellpool had sailed in the *Vulture*.

"Why didn't you go on board of her instead of waiting for Dunk?" asked Landy.

"I was afraid to go on board without him," replied Livy.

"Did Captain Wellpool know that his son was to rob my house and set it on fire?" inquired Captain Ridgefield, sternly.

"I don't know whether he did or not; Dunky did not tell me about that."

"Did he tell you what was in the tin trunk he wanted to get?"

"He didn't say a word about any tin trunk, nor what he wanted to get in your house," protested the assistant. "He only said he was to get a lot of money, and he would give me half of it if I would keep watch outside of the house."

"You can go now," said Captain Ridgefield, somewhat to the astonishment of his son.

"You may come here to breakfast in about an hour; and now you may go down to the place where the boat was, and see if it is there now, and find out all you can about Dunk and his father," said the captain, who only desired to get rid of the fellow for the present.

Livy promised to go to the place indicated and to the house of Captain Wellpool; and he left by the front door.

Captain Ridgefield unlocked the drawer in the desk where he had put his money and papers when he emptied the tin trunk, and then seated himself at the desk to look them over.

"Dunk would have made a good haul if he had got what was in the trunk," said the captain, as he picked up the money, after he had opened the pocket-book in which it had been placed.

"You said there was over a thousand dollars in it," remarked Landy.

"Yes; and I collected it to carry with me on the voyage to Isora, to pay the bills on the way; but I don't think the money was what Dunk was after," continued the captain, as he picked up a document which was written in Spanish. "This is what he wanted."

"That is the concession, or grant, I suppose."

"It is; and it cost me a good deal of time and trouble to obtain it. I would not have parted with it for ten thousand dollars."

"Dunk must have known all about it, or he would not have taken the trouble to steal it."

"Of course his father told him about it, and perhaps told him to get it if he could; but I can hardly believe he would have sent him to rob and burn my house, for such an undertaking was altogether too risky. I am more inclined, after thinking the matter over, to believe Dunk did the job on his own account."

"But his father hates you badly enough to lead him to do such a thing," suggested Landy.

"We were once the best of friends, but I was a great deal more prosperous in my business than he was. When I made five thousand on a venture to Cardenas, he lost about the same amount. I lent him my gains on a bottomry bond to enable him to bring home a profitable cargo."

"He couldn't find any fault with that," added Landy.

"But he did, in reality, for he became my enemy from that time, though we had always talked of making the voyage together to the Gulf of California, with our families, and settling there."

"Don't anybody else know about the silver mine?"

"So far as I know no one else knew anything about the silver mine, or the gold that was buried there by a Spanish captain, who was murdered by the Indians."

"But the fellow that told you knew about it."

"Of course he did; but he was sick when he gave us information. We took him on board of the bark at another island, and Wellpool and I took care of him. In gratitude for what we did for him, he told us how to find the mine and the gold; and he died a few days after we sailed from Isora, so that the secret remained with us."

"But Captain Wellpool borrowed the five thousand dollars of you several years ago. Why didn't he pay it when he sold his cargo?"

"He was not honest enough to do so; and, my son, if you want to keep your friend, don't lend him any money," said the captain, with a deprecatory smile. "Wellpool said that he lost money on his sugar, and he said he could not pay me. Then he began to avoid me."

"Why didn't you attach his vessel, or do something to get your money, father?" asked Landy.

"Because I believed that he was really poor, and that if I took his vessel from him, he would not be able to support his family; and his wife and daughter, to say nothing of his son, cost him a great deal more than mine did me."

"Then he really meant to cheat you out of the five thousand dollars he owed you?"

"I have no doubt of that; and I am sorry now that I did not take his vessel; for he appears to be using the money he owes me to fit out his expedition to Isora, and rob me of my share of the treasure. But I shall see that he does not succeed," said Captain Ridgefield, with energy, as he rose from his chair, and put the late contents of the trunk back into the drawer.

"The Albatross is at anchor in the channel, and you have been getting ready for this voyage to Isora for the last month," suggested Landy.

"Yes, and we have not a day or an hour to lose now, though I am sure I can beat the *Vulture* on the trip by at least a week."

They continued to talk about the voyage and the island till breakfast time, when Livy appeared again; and he looked as though he had made good use of his time.

"The boat was gone from the place where we left it," said the culprit, without waiting for any questions. "Then I went to Captain Wellpool's house, and another family moved into it yesterday."

"Who is the family?" asked the captain.

"The man's name is Burnon, and he moved over from Dennis, and his son said he had a three years' lease of the house. The captain and his wife slept there

last night, and went on board of the schooner early this morning."

"Where did Dunk sleep last night, if he slept anywhere?"

"He turned in with me on board of the *Vulture*; and we took the jolly-boat to go up to the place where we landed. Then I went down to the wharf, and a man told me the schooner had sailed for New York, and that the captain was going to live there; but I knew he was not going there."

This information was all discounted in advance by the captain, though he had wondered what his former friend had done with his house. It only remained to race the *Vulture* to Isora.

CHAPTER VII.

A RACE OF GIGANTIC SAVAGES.

It was a full week before Captain Ridgefield was ready to sail for the distant island which had been the subject of his dreams for so many years, though he made all possible haste to expedite his departure.

He had to provision the *Albatross* for two years, for he was not willing to incur any risk, as all his family were to go with him, consisting of his wife, daughter and son.

Nearly a year before he had purchased four twelve-pound brass cannone, with an abundant supply of ammunition for them which had been stored in a building he owned near the wharf. He had brought these from New York, though he kept his own secret in regard to them.

But he was obliged to make a hasty trip to Boston to procure many needed articles, and the whole family went in the schooner, for Mrs. Ridgefield and her daughter had to supply themselves with suitable clothing for an absence of several years.

The captain sold his house at a considerable sacrifice, for he had some doubt whether he should ever return to his native land again, or at least to the town in which most of his life had been spent.

Livy Wooster staid in Channelpoint, for the captain was not disposed to prosecute him in the absence of his principal, and he made the trip to Boston, as the captain was short handed.

He did his duty so well that the captain decided in the end to ship him as one of his crew, though he had already engaged a lot of his old hands, including the mate who had sailed with him for years, for the voyage.

Everything that could possibly be required for the voyage and the colonizing of the island had been provided, and the ship's company appeared as soon as the *Albatross* returned from her trip.

Captain Ridgefield did not find it necessary to conceal his purpose in making this voyage from his men, though he prudently kept many of the details to himself, or at least within the knowledge of his own family.

His first duty on his return was to put the brass guns and the ammunition on board of the schooner; and to avoid any unnecessary talk among the people of the town, he did this work on the night before his departure. Hesaw that he might be accused of engaging in a filibustering expedition, and that the government might subject him to some annoying delay; but he put the warlike articles where he could mount them whenever they should be needed.

Nearly the whole population of Channelpoint gathered on the shore at the hour appointed for the sailing of the vessel, for the captain and his family were very popular in the town; and as the schooner cast off her fasts, and the jib was hoisted, several rounds of cheers on the part of the males, and a cloud of waving handkerchiefs on the part of the women, manifested the good will of the assemblage.

The breeze was tolerably fresh, and the *Albatross* went off on her long voyage as though she fully comprehended what was expected of her. She had recently been put in perfect repair for this cruise.

Captain Ridgefield took the wheel himself to pilot the vessel out of the channel into the broad ocean, and Landy picked up a newspaper he had just obtained from the post office.

The young man was a diligent student of the newspapers, and in spite of the excitement of leaving his native shores, perhaps forever, he seated himself near his father to ascertain the news of the day.

"What is this, father?" suddenly demanded the

reader, as he rose from his seat on the taffrail, with his gaze fixed intently on the paper.

"I don't know what it is," replied the captain, laughing. "As you have the paper, you ought to be able to tell what it is better than I can."

"Where are the Tiburon Islands, father?" asked Landy, lowering the paper and looking at the captain.

"Tiburon Island, for I don't think there is more than one of that name, is in the Gulf of California, and you will be likely to see it in the course of three or four months, if all goes well with us. What about this island?"

"This paper says there is a race of Indians there that are about six feet and a half tall," replied Landy.

"That isn't stretching it very much, for I have seen some of them. What does it say about them?" replied the captain.

"They are called the Seris Indians, and it says they will average over six feet high. They live on raw food, and are terribly savage," continued Landy, reading the statement from the paper.

"I hope we are not going anywhere near such creatures as that," interposed Mrs. Ridgefield, who was watching the receding shore with her daughter Melicent, whom everybody called Milly.

"That is just about where we are going," added the captain, glancing at the female portion of the family.

"Isora is within a few miles of Tiburon, and we all owe a great deal of gratitude to these big Indians for keeping all settlers, and even all visitors, from our island. I never should have obtained the concession if it had not been that these giants of savages have rendered Isora practically of no value."

Captain Ridgefield thought he had better tell his wife the exact truth, and let her get accustomed to what was before her, for he believed she and Milly would soon get used to the idea.

"But we shall all be murdered, and perhaps eaten!" exclaimed the captain's wife; and Milly shuddered at the horrible description of the gigantic Indians of Tiburon.

"As they take their food raw, you will have the consolation of not being cooked before you are eaten, Susan," added the captain, laughing heartily at the fears of his wife.

"You needn't make fun of it! I don't believe I should have been willing to come if I had known about these Indians before," said the lady.

"You wouldn't? Then you would have been willing to have me eaten, cooked or uncooked, if you let me go alone. But they are not cannibals, and the paper doesn't say so, does it, Landy?"

"It does not; but it doesn't look to me as though these Indians would be very good neighbors, if Isora is within a few miles of them," suggested Landy, who could not help feeling a little apprehension.

"I hope you won't go there, Stacy," protested the wife.

"I haven't the least fear of them," answered the captain. "I am as sure as I can be of anything that I can manage them without the least difficulty."

"Do you think you can do so much more than anybody else has been able to do, Stacy?" asked the lady.

"I have looked into the matter enough to know that no one ever tried in good earnest to do anything with these Indians. I have seen such fellows all along the coast, and I have nothing but contempt for them," said the captain, confidently.

"Well, I don't think you would start with your family for a place where you would not be able to protect us," remarked Mrs. Ridgefield beginning to take a more sensible view of the subject.

"That sounds more like you, Susan. I don't believe anybody thinks any more of his family than I do of mine; and I certainly should not take any one of them where I could not take good care of him or her," said the captain, with energy. "What else does the paper say, Landy?"

"It says there are about three hundred of these Indians; that they use poisoned arrows—"

"Poisoned arrows!" exclaimed Mrs. Ridgefield. "Then if one of us should be hit with an arrow, it would be sure death, even from a slight wound."

"Do you know what we have in the hold of the *Albatross*, Susan?" asked her husband.

"Of course I do; you have beef, pork, vegetables, groceries and things enough for us to eat for two or three years; besides tools, seeds, a small house, and no end of other things."

ARMY AND NAVY

"But no poisoned arrows, though I have something that will keep them at a respectable distance from us."

"What have you got, I should like to know, that will do that?"

"I told you about the four brass twelve-pounders and the powder, shot and shell I bought in New York. The giants will learn at once not to come too near them. You will be as safe as you were in Channelport."

Mrs. Ridgefield seemed to be satisfied with whatever her husband said, and the captain asked his son to finish reading the article in the paper.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ALBATROS ENTERS PERLA BAY.

"These terrible savages resemble Malayans," continued Landy.

"But they are not Malayan, or anything like them," added the captain. "I am afraid some newspaper has a reporter out on Tiburon, who finds it necessary to do something to make himself valuable to his journal."

"Few civilized people have dared to visit their island," Landy went on.

"Probably that is so, for the average civilized man doesn't care about meeting such scalawags as these savages are."

"They have crossed over to the main land, and robbed and murdered a great many peaceable people," Landy read from the paper.

"That is bad; but they would not have done it if I had been within gun shot of the island of Isora," the captain commented.

"I don't like the idea of their poisoned arrows," said Mrs. Ridgefield, uneasily.

"How many miles do you suppose they can shoot those poisoned arrows, Susan?" asked her husband.

"I don't believe they can send them even one mile, or half a mile or a quarter of a mile."

"Or even three hundred feet, while my brass guns are good for a mile. I promise as faithfully as a man can, that I will not let one of these blood-thirsty monsters come within a mile of you. I was in the army during the war, and I know how to handle a gun, for I was in a battery, and came out a captain; though I went in as a private."

"Mr. Pitburn was in the same battery," Landy put in, referring to the mate of the schooner.

"So was Bockus Poole; and that makes three of us that know how to handle a field-piece; and the rest of the crew can soon learn from us."

"But there are three hundred of the savages," said the lady.

"The more the merrier, for we could take care of as many of them as can stand up this side of sundown."

Captain Ridgefield succeeded in producing in the minds of those who heard him some of his own contempt for the savages described in the article, which doubtless appeared in most of the papers all over the country.

Before noon the schooner was out of sight of land, and the captain had given up the helm to the second mate, Bockus Poole, and the business of dividing the crew into two watches was in progress.

Before night everything on board was working smoothly, and even the captain's wife and daughter were happy in the prospect before them, in spite of the terrible giants of the island of Tiburon.

However interesting the long voyage of nearly four months was to the family of Captain Ridgefield, the limits of this story will not admit of any description of it, for nothing less than a volume could do justice to it.

The family circle remained unbroken, and they had ample room for housekeeping in the large cabin of the schooner, for when the captain built the vessel he had an eye to the comfort of his wife and children, who had occasionally made a voyage with him and were almost as much at home on the ocean as in the house at Channelport.

They had left no one behind, as is generally the case with voyagers on the sea, and they were abundantly provided with books, so that none of their time was wasted, and none of it was tiresome except when the Albatross was becalmed, though she had only a very few days of this dull quiet in the tropics.

Miss Milly, who was only thirteen years old, attended to her usual school studies under the instruction of her mother, who had formerly been a teacher in

Portland, and all of them studied Spanish for a couple of hours every day, the captain having a fair knowledge of the language, acquired under a professor and by practice in the West Indies.

The officers and seamen of the vessel had been carefully selected by Captain Ridgefield, for they were to associate more or less with his family, not only on board of the schooner, but after they reached their new home on the island of Isora.

When the Albatross came in sight of Cape Palmo, the inner cape of the peninsula of California, it was difficult for members of the family to realize that they had been at sea nearly four months, for they had lived just about as they did at home, though of course they were deprived of many of their accustomed luxuries.

The Vulture had not been seen or heard of during the long voyage, though the captain had made diligent inquiry for her at every port he visited to procure water and fresh provisions.

But the schooner had over four hundred miles more to make before she reached her destination; but she had favoring winds, and in a couple of days more Captain Ridgefield pointed out the large island of Tiburon to all on board.

It was over thirty miles long, and it looked too beautiful to be the home of such miscreants as the newspaper described; but none of them were seen as the vessel sailed along its shores.

After the Albatross passed Cape Palmo, the captain had caused the four twelve pounders to be hoisted out of the hold, mounted on their carriages, and put in position at the portholes which had been made for them before the vessel sailed.

As soon as the pieces were in place, all hands were drilled in handling them; and the men were greatly interested in this occupation, so that they made rapid progress under the instructions of Mr. Pitburn, who had charge of one gun's crew, while Mr. Poole, the second mate, was in command of another.

For two days this exercise was kept up, and the crew were soon ready to take part in any conflict that might be forced upon them, for though the captain felt very strong in the power which his guns and small arms gave him, he was not at all inclined to provoke a quarrel, and intended to keep the peace, even with the terrible savages, if it proved to be possible.

"There is another island," shouted Landy from the forecastle, where he was observing the surroundings of his new home, as the schooner passed the last point of Tiburon.

"That's Isora," replied his father, who was in the waist.

"Where is it? Let me see it!" cried Milly, as she went forward with her mother.

"It isn't a very big island," continued Landy, when all the family had gathered near the foremast.

"It is less than four miles long, and about two in width," said the captain, as he brought his spy-glass to bear upon the island. "It has one of the finest bays I ever went into at the farther end of it; and that is the only place on it where a landing can be made."

In half an hour the Albatross was approaching the entrance to this bay; but the passage to it was so narrow that the bay itself could not be seen, and the captain had taken the wheel to pilot the vessel into it.

"There is a schooner in the bay!" shouted Landy, who kept his place at the heel of the bowsprit.

"What does she look like?" called Captain Ridgefield.

"Does she show any colors?"

"No colors in sight; but she looks like an American vessel. She is a schooner, about as big as the Albatross."

The captain had been confident that he should reach Isora before the Vulture, and he was not willing to admit that the schooner was Captain Wellpool's vessel, even to himself, though the description fitted her.

At the right time the captain tacked ship, and stood directly toward the entrance to Perla Bay, as the Mexicans called it, and in a few minutes more he could see the schooner which Landy had described to him.

"There is a big row in there!" shouted Landy, who had gone a little way up the fore rigging to obtain a better view of the bay. "There are three or four boats, full of big Indians, making for the schooner!"

"That vessel is the Vulture, and Wellpool has a good chance to be wiped out, with all his family," said Captain Ridgefield.

It looked as though an attack had been made.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Cryptogram

A STORY OF
NORTH-WEST CANADA

BY

WM. MURRAY GRAYDON

Author of "A Legacy of Peril," "In Forbidden Nepal," etc.

("THE CRYPTOGRAM" was commenced in No. 27. Back numbers can be obtained of all newsdealers.)

CHAPTER XII.

A WARNING IN WOODCRAFT.

HAT night we pitched our camp on a wooded island in a small lake, erecting, as was the usual custom, a couple of lean-tos of bark and fir boughs. Gummidge owned the traveling outfit and the factor of Fort York had provided Baptiste and myself with what we needed in the way of weapons and ammunition. We were all well armed, for none journeyed otherwise through the wilderness in those days. But at this time, and from the part of the country we had to traverse, it seemed a most unlikely thing that we would run into any peril. However, neither Gummidge nor I were disposed to relax the ordinary precautions, and when we retired we set one of the voyageurs to watch.

This man—Moralle by name—wakened me about two o'clock in the morning by shaking my arm gently, and in a whisper begged me to come outside. I followed him from the lean-to across the island, which was no more than a dozen yards in diameter. The night was very dark, and it was impossible to make out the shore, though it was less than a quarter of a mile away. A deep silence brooded on land and water.

"What do you want with me?" I asked, sharply.

"Pardon, sir," replied Moralle, "but a little while ago, as I stood here, I heard a low splash. I crouched down to watch the better, and out yonder on the lake I saw the head and arms of a swimmer. Then a pebble crunched under my moccasins, and the man turned and made off as quietly as he came."

"You have keen eyes," said I. "Look, the water is black! A fish made a splash, and you imagined the rest."

"I saw the swimmer, sir," he persisted, doggedly.

"You saw a moose or a caribou," I suggested.

"Would a moose approach the island?" he asked, "with the scent of our camp-fire blowing to his nostrils?"

This was true, and I could not deny it.

"Then you would have me believe," said I, "that some enemy swam out from the mainland to spy upon us?"

"It was a man," the voyageur answered, "and he was swimming this way."

"I will finish your watch, Moralle," said I. "Give me your musket, and go to bed. Be careful not to waken the others."

He shuffled off without a word, and I was left to my lonely vigil. I had detected a smell of liquor in Moralle's breath, and I was disposed to believe that his story had no more foundation than the splashing of a fish. At all events, while I paced the strip of beach for two hours, I saw or heard nothing alarming. There was now a glimmer of dawn in the east, so I wakened Baptiste, bidding him without explanation to take my place, and returned to the lean-to for a half-hour's sleep.

It was broad daylight when Gummidge roused me. The fire was blazing and the voyageurs were prepar-

ing breakfast. Flora and Mrs. Gummidge were kneeling on a flat stone, dipping their faces and hands into the crystal waters of the lake. The wooded shores rose around us in majestic solitude, and I scanned them in all directions without discovering any trace of human occupation. I made no mention of the incident of the night, attaching no importance to it; nor did Moralle have anything to say on the subject.

Sunrise found us embarked and already some distance down the lake. We were in the heart of the woods, and the wild beauty of the Great Lone Land cast its mystic spell upon all of us.

The morning was yet young when we passed from the lake into one of its many outlets. This was a narrow stream, navigable at first, but quickly becoming too shallow and rocky for our further progress. So we left the water, and there was now a portage of two miles over a level stretch of forest, at the end of which we would strike the Churchill river at a point twenty miles above Fort Royal.

We started off rapidly, Baptiste and the three other voyageurs leading the way with the canoe on their shoulders. The paddles and a part of the load where inside, and Gummidge and I carried the rest. The women had no burdens, and could easily keep pace with us.

"Have you passed this way before?" asked Gummidge.

"Only once," I replied, "and that was some years ago."

"The place reminds me of the enchanted forests one reads of in old fairy tales," said Mrs. Gummidge.

"I wish we were out of it," exclaimed Flora. "It has a sad and depressing influence on me."

Something in her voice made me turn and look at her, and she quickly averted her eyes.

"What's that?" cried Gummidge, an instant later. "Don't you see? There it lies, shining."

I darted past him to the left of the path and at the base of a tree I picked up a hunting knife sheathed in a case of tanned buckskin. We all stopped, and Lavigne, one of the voyageurs, left the canoe to his comrades and took the weapon from my hand. He examined it with keen and grave interest.

"It is just such a knife as the men of the Northwest Company carry," he declared.

"Yes, you are right," assented Gummidge; and I agreed with him.

For a minute or more Lavigne searched the ground in the vicinity, creeping here and there on all fours. Then he rose to his feet with the air of one who has made an unpleasant discovery.

"Indians have passed this way within a few hours," he announced, "and a white man was with them. They went toward the northwest."

Gummidge and I were fairly good at woodcraft, but the marks in the grass baffled us. Yet we did not dream of doubting or questioning Lavigne's assertion, for he was known to be a skilled and expert tracker. Redskins and a Northwest man together! It was a combination, in these times of evil rumor, that boded no good. I remembered Moralle's tale of the swimmer, and I felt a sudden uneasiness.

"We must be careful," said Gummidge. "This is a fine neighborhood for an ambuscade."

I glanced at Flora, and by her pale and frightened face I saw she was thinking of the same thing that was in my own mind.

"Do you suppose he is near us, Denzil?" she asked, stepping close to my side.

"Impossible," I replied. "Cuthbert Mackenzie is hundreds of miles away in Quebec. Do not be afraid. There is no danger, and the river is not far off."

But my assuring words were from the lips only. At heart I felt that Mackenzie was just the sort of man to have followed us to the North—a thing he could easily have done by land in this time. Gummidge took as serious a view of the matter, though for different reasons, and he approved the precautions I suggested.

So when we started off again, our order of march was reversed and otherwise changed. Gummidge and I went ahead, in single file, with our muskets ready for immediate use. The women came next, and then the canoe; we had put the luggage into it, and the voyageurs did not grumble at the extra load.

Less than a mile remained to be covered, and I was alert for attack with every foot of the way. But no Indian yells or musket-shots broke the stillness of the forest, and I was heartily glad when we emerged on the bank of the Churchill. Only twenty miles down stream to Fort Royal! No further thoughts of danger troubled us. Swiftly we embarked, and swung out on the rushing blue tide.

After the first five miles the scene changed a little. The river narrowed, and grew more swift. The hills receded right and left, and a strip of dense forest fringed the banks on either hand. A dull roar in the distance warned us that we were approaching well-known and dangerous falls, where it would be necessary to land and make a brief portage through the rocks.

Closer and closer we swept, and louder and louder rang the thunder of the rapids. The voyageurs began to make in a little toward the left shore, and just then a musket cracked shrilly from the forest on that side. Gardapie, who was immediately in front of me, dropped his paddle, and leaped convulsively to his feet. He clutched at his bleeding throat, gave a gurgling cry of agony, and pitched head first out of the canoe, nearly upsetting it as he slid off the gunwale.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AMBUSCADE.

The attack was so sudden and unlooked for, and took us at such a disadvantage, that it was a mercy the half of us were not killed by the enemy's first straggling volley. For on the instant that Gardapie fell dead into the river two more shots rang out, and then a third and a fourth. A bullet whistled by my ear, and another flew so close to Baptiste that he dropped his paddle and threw himself flat, uttering a shrill "Nom de Dieu!" The women screamed, and Lavinge cried out with a curse that he had a ball in his right arm.

"Redskins!" I yelled. "Down—down for your lives!"

The canoe was luckily of a good depth, and we all crouched low and hugged the bottom. The firing had ceased as abruptly as it opened. Not a shot or a yell disturbed the quiet of the woods on either hand, and but for poor Gardapie's vacant place, and the splash of blood where he had been kneeling, I might have thought that the whole thing was a hideous dream. We drifted on with the current for a moment, while the roar of the falls swelled louder. Our loaded muskets were in our grasp, but we dared not expose our heads above the gunwales.

I looked back toward the stern, and saw Moralle tying a bandage on Lavinge's wounded arm. Gummidge was bareheaded, and he told me that a ball had carried his cap into the river.

"We're not done with the red devils," he added. "It's a bad scrape, Carew. I've no doubt the Indians have been won over by the Northwest people, and hostilities have already begun."

On that point I did not agree with him, but I was unwilling to speak what was in my mind while Flora was listening. We were between two perils, and I called out to Moralle for his opinion.

"If the redskins are in any force it will be impossible to land and make the portage," I said. "We are

within a quarter of a mile of the rapids now. What are the chances of running them safely?"

"I have taken a canoe through them twice," replied Moralle, "and I could do it again. That is, provided I can paddle and look where I am going. Shall I try it, sir?"

"No, not yet; wait a little," I answered.

"I don't like this silence," exclaimed Gummidge. "Why did the redskins stop firing so suddenly? Mark my word, Carew, there's a piece of devilry brewing. I'm afraid not one of us will—"

I stopped him by a gesture, and spoke a few comforting words to Flora; her face was very white, but beyond that she showed no trace of fear. Then I crept a little past Baptiste, and with the point of my knife I hurriedly made two small holes below the gunwales of the canoe, one on each side. I peeped through both in turn, and the curve of the bow gave me a clear a view ahead as I could have wished.

What I saw partly explained the meaning of the brief silence—scarcely more than a minute had elapsed since the musket volley. Here and there, in the leafy woods to right and left I caught a glimpse of dusky, swiftly-moving bodies. We were close upon the falls, and but for the noise of the tumbling waters I could have heard the scurrying feet of our determined foes.

"What do you make out?" Gummidge whispered.

"The Indians are running ahead of us through the forest," I replied. "They expect that we will try the portage, and then they will have us in a trap. Our only chance is to dash down the rapids."

"It's a mighty poor one," murmured Gummidge; and as he spoke I heard an hysterical sob from his wife.

"We are not going quite straight," I called to Moralle. "If we keep on this course we will hit the rocks. A few strokes to the left—"

"I'll manage that, sir," the plucky voyageur interrupted.

I glanced over my shoulder, and saw him rise to his knees and begin to paddle. He was not fired on, as I had expected would be the case, so Baptiste and I ventured to lift our heads. As we watched, we held our muskets ready for the shoulder.

The current was bearing us on swiftly. A short distance below, the river narrowed to a couple of hundred feet, and here stretched the line of half-sunken rocks that marked the beginning of the falls. In the very center was a break several yards wide, and straight for this the canoe was now driving. There was no sign of the enemy, and it was difficult to realize that such a deadly peril awaited us.

Bang went a musket, and a puff of bluish smoke curled from the forest on the left. The ball passed over Moralle's head; he ceased paddling and dropped under cover. Baptiste did the same, but I kept my head up, looking for a chance to return the shot. My attention had just been attracted by a movement between the trees, when Gummidge cried, hoarsely:

"Keep down, Miss Hatherton! That was a mad thing to do!"

I turned around sharply as Gummidge released his hold of Flora, who, I judged, had been exposing herself recklessly. I was startled by her appearance. She looked at me with frightened eyes and parted lips, with a face the hue of ashes.

"Save me!" she gasped. "I saw him! I saw him!"

"Save who?" I cried.

"Cuthbert Mackenzie! I am sure it was he, Denzil!" And she pointed to the right.

I looked hard in that direction, scanning the woods right and left. By Heavens, the girl had not been mistaken. Through a rift in the foliage, nearly opposite the canoe, peered a swarthy, sinister countenance, and I recognized the features of Cuthbert Mackenzie. I took aim at him, but before I could fire he was gone. My brain seemed in a whirl. I had found the clue—the fleshy cue—to the attack that threatened to cost us our lives. Bent on revenge, Mackenzie had traveled up country to intercept us on the way to the fort—to kill me, and to capture Flora. He had bribed the savages to help him, and he and his ruthless allies had been in the vicinity of our camp on the previous night.

Swiftly these things coursed through my mind. I tried to speak to Flora, but my tongue seemed to be held fast. I heard a shot—another, and another. The bullets sang close to my ears.

"Down—down!" warned Gummidge.

"Keep low!" shouted Moralle and Lavigne in one breath.

My brain grew suddenly clear, but I did not heed the friendly advice. Three shots had missed me, and I knew that the canoe was jerking about too much with the current to admit of a sure aim on the part of the savages.

"Paddle on, Moralle!" I cried. "Faster—faster!"

Meanwhile I watched the right bank, hoping to get another chance at Cuthbert Mackenzie. Baptiste—brave fellow!—was on the alert with me but he was scanning the left shore, and a sudden exclamation from him drew my eyes in the same direction. Ten yards in front, on the edge of the timber, a redskin thrust his coppery face from the leaves. I fired as quickly, and the savage vanished with a yell of pain.

We were almost upon the rapids, and half a minute more would see us plunged into the seething, foaming slide of angry waters. To right and left, where the jagged reef touched the forest, stood three or four painted redskins, with muskets to their shoulders. And some distance below the falls, where the water broadened and shallowed, I made out the feather-decked heads of more Indians. This was a dread and significant discovery, and I instantly perceived the trap that had been laid for us.

"Keep under cover!" I shouted at the top of my voice. "Be ready to fight when we pass the rapids! The devils are waiting for us below, blocking the way! Don't try to paddle, Moralle. The canoe is headed straight for the rift in the middle! It's sure death if you show yourself."

CHAPTER XIV.

AN INDIAN'S GRATITUDE.

Above the thunder of the falls my warning was heard and understood. Glancing back to make sure, I saw the startled faces of the two women, and the grimly-set countenance of Jim Gummidge. From the stern Moralle half rose, looked this way and that, and made two daring strokes with the paddle. He dropped under cover again just as a volley of musket balls swept close over the canoe.

"You fool!" I shouted at him.

"I had to do it," he yelled back. "We were swinging to the left. It's all right now."

"Steady! Here we go!" cried Gummidge.

I gave Flora a brief look that brought a dash of hot color to her pale cheeks, and then I turned quickly to one of my loopholes—Baptiste was gazing from the other. There was scarcely time to see anything. Like a flash I made out the little knot of painted savages on the reef to the left, and caught a blur of scarlet and copper from the shallows beyond the rapids. The next instant the turbulent waters leaped up and hid the view, and we struck the verge of the falls.

The Indians to right and left of the channel had evidently been posted there to prevent us from landing, and they did not fire on us as we shot by but they yelled and screeched like fiends, their comrades below joining in, and above the horrid din of voices I heard the roar of the great waves that now surrounded us.

For a few seconds—it could have been no more—we hugged the bottom tightly. Spray and foam dashed over us; the frail craft pitched and tossed, swung round and round; billows and rocks smote the toughened birch-bark. Then came a sudden crash, the canoe turned over in the twinkling of an eye, and out we went into the raging falls, studded thickly with sunken boulders and jagged, protruding reefs.

I was whirled about by the angry waters as though I had been a mere chip, sucked deep down, hurled to the surface, and bruised against rocks. I fought hard for life and held my breath, and when a spar of moss-grown boulder loomed suddenly in front of me, I caught it with both arms and held it fast.

At the first I was grateful to Heaven for this mercy, and thought of nothing else. I filled my lungs with air and took a tighter grip of the rock. Then a burst of shrill yells and a couple of musket shots, ringing above the clamor of the rapids, roused me from my semi-stupor. I remembered that the canoe had capsized, flinging us all to the flood or to the waiting savages. And Flora! What was her fate? The dread that she had perished sickened my heart.

I shook the water from my dripping hair and eyes, and looked about me. There was little of cheer or hope

in what I saw. I was stuck midway in the falls, with my face down stream. Many yards below, where the foaming slide of water broadened into choppy waves and swirling shallows, Baptiste was splashing hip-deep for shore. Three redskins were dashing after him with drawn tomahawks, and I gave the poor fellow up for lost.

Moralle had been carried through the cordon of savages, and had reached the further bank. There, on the edge of the forest, he was locked limb to limb with a stalwart warrior. The two were down, rolling amid the grass and gravel, and three Indians were watching for a chance to shoot the voyageur without injuring their comrade. Off to my right, in a deep, whirling eddy formed by a big boulder, Gummidge was struggling hard to save himself and his wife; he had the use of but one arm, for the other was fastened around the little woman's waist. A short distance beyond them, Lavigne, in spite of his wounded shoulder, was clinging in the bushy limb of a tree that overhung and dipped to the surface of the stream.

All this I observed at a sweeping glance—scarcely a moment could have elapsed since the upsetting of the canoe—and in vain I sought further for trace of Flora. That my companions were in peril of their lives, that death by drowning or the tomahawk must be my own fate—these things seemed of slight importance to me at the time. The canoe I discovered readily enough. It was wedged broadside to the stream no more than four yards above me, creaking and bending with the fierce current, its bow and stern jammed against half-submerged pinnacles of rock.

"Flora—Flora!" I shouted, loud and hoarsely.

Above the thunder of the waters, above the yelling of the bloodthirsty savages, I fancied I heard an answering cry. Again I called her name.

Just then I saw two white hands gripping the gunwale of the canoe, and Lavigne, who was still clinging to the tree, nodded his head in that direction, and shouted something I could not understand. The next instant the shattered canoe as torn loose by the rush of the current. It shot toward me, turned over twice, and sank from sight. And close behind it—she had been clinging to it all the while—my darling rose out of the greenish water. Swiftly she drifted on, the folds of her dress inflated with air, her hands beating feebly, and her white, agonized face staring at mine.

I saw that she must pass beyond me, at least an arm's length out of reach. I did not hesitate an instant. Letting go of my precious rock, I struck out across the current. I swam alongside of the helpless girl, and caught her slender waist tightly.

Escaping the network of boulders and reefs as by a miracle, we were swept down the remainder of the tumbling rapids. At the bottom I found a footing, and with my burden I struggled on, now slipping and floundering, now breasting the furious current, half blinded at every strike by the dashing spray that beat in my face. But I was alive to the danger that awaited below, and I felt that there was no hope for either of us.

"Save me, Denzil! Don't let me die!" Flora murmured faintly in my ear.

"I will save you," I cried, "or I will perish with you."

I had hardly spoken when a voice—an English voice—rang loud and sharp from the forest:

"Don't harm the girl! Take her alive!"

I knew that the command came from Cuthbert Mackenzie. He was hidden by the trees, and I vainly tried to catch a glimpse of him while I fought my way through the boiling current. A moment later the stream grew suddenly calmer and more shallow, and a few feet below me, on a reef that jutted out into the water, I saw an Indian standing. The sunlight shone on his feathered scalp-lock, on his breech-clout and fringed leggings, on his hideously-painted face. With a whoop of triumph he levelled his musket and pointed it straight at my head.

I heard the click of the hammer as it was drawn back, and knew that I must die—shot down like a dog. Life was sweet, and I could have cursed my bitter fate as I stood there, breast-deep in the water, trying to shelter Flora with my body. She uttered a heart-rending cry, and clung to me tightly.

"Save the girl, but kill the Englishman!" Mackenzie yelled again from the shelter of the forest.

The savage seemed to hesitate, still keeping his finger on the trigger of his weapon and the muzzle pointed

at my head and as I stared at him, and noted the purple scars on his breast, I suddenly recognized him beneath the war-paint that wrinkled his face. A wild hope flashed to my mind.

"Grey Moose!" I cried, hoarsely. "Is this your gratitude? Don't you know me?"

The merciless aspect of the savage's countenance softened. With a guttural grunt he leaped forward and gazed at me hard. Then he lowered his musket and said, quickly:

"Pantherfoot!"

"Ay, Pantherfoot," I replied. "Do I deserve death at your hands?"

"The white man is my brother," said the Indian. "I knew not that he would be here, else I would have refused to take the war-path. I have listened to words of evil."

"And you will save us all?" I cried.

For answer, Grey Moose turned to his braves, who were whooping like fiends and firing an occasional shot, and shouted a few words to them in the native tongue. In a moment more—almost before I could realize my good fortune—every Indian had melted away into the forest. I heard Mackenzie cry out with baffled rage and furiously curse his recreant allies. Then a silence fell, broken only by the dull roar of the falls.

I waded to the shore, and placed Flora's trembling and half-unconscious form against a tree. Baptiste quickly joined me; he had escaped from his pursuers, and had seen the whole affair from his hiding-place in the thick timber. Gummidge and his wife were clinging to the boulders in mid-stream, and with some difficulty they joined us. But Lavigne had disappeared, and poor Moralle lay motionless on the opposite bank, apparently dead. Cuthbert Mackenzie's villainy had cost us dear.

CHAPTER XV.

FORT ROYAL.

At first, huddled there together on the rocky spit of land, we stared at one another in dazed silence. It had been so sudden a transformation that we could not comprehend it all at once. A moment before, while the horrid chorus of war-whoops rang in our ears we had each of us been marked out for death by tomahawk or bullet. Now our red enemies had vanished as swiftly and noiselessly as the deer; there was no sound but the droning chant of the rapids, and the singing of the birds in the forest trees.

But five of us were left; we had been eight that morning. As I thought of the three brave fellows we had lost, I made a vow that sooner or later I would avenge them. Then I knelt beside Flora, and by comforting words sought to banish the look of frozen horror from her lovely face. Mrs. Gummidge had fainted, and her husband was dashing water on her temples. Baptiste was wringing his dripping clothes and moaning the loss of his prized musket. We were all drenched to the skin, and it behoved us to mend our sad plight as quickly as possible.

"Our lives are safe, Gummidge," I said, rising, "and that is something to be thankful for. We must have a fire to dry our clothes, and then we will be off on foot for the fort. The canoe is at the bottom, and crushed beyond repair."

"But why did those red varmints spare us?" Gummidge cried, hoarsely. "They melted away like chaff. What does it mean, Carew?"

"The leader of the Indians was Grey Moose," I replied. "I saved him from a grizzly last winter, and this was his way of paying the debt. The moment he recognized me he called off his braves."

"Then they were not on the warpath against the company? There was a white man with them."

"I know that," I answered, "and it was he who hired the savages."

I briefly explained my view of the situation to Gummidge, who was aware of all that had happened in Quebec.

"It is a clear case," I concluded, "and the motive was revenge and the capture of Miss Hatherton. Mackenzie chose this spot so that he could drive us over the falls. No doubt he intended to kill all of us but the girl."

By this time Mrs. Gummidge was sitting up, and the color was returning to her cheeks. Baptiste set to work with flint and steel to light a fire, and meanwhile Gummidge and I waded through the shallows to

the opposite side of the stream. To our surprise, we found Moralle lying unconscious, but breathing. He had two ugly tomahawk wounds on the head and shoulder, but I judged that he had a fighting chance for life. Gardapie had gone to the bottom above the falls, and doubtless Lavigne's body had been sucked into one of the deep holes below, for we could find no trace of it.

We called Baptiste over, and he helped to carry poor Moralle back. We put him down by the fire, which was blazing cheerily, and Gummidge started to dress his wounds. Flora was standing alongside the flames. She was shivering with cold, and her face looked blue and pinched. I made her swallow some brandy—I had a flask in my pocket—and the fiery liquor warmed her at once.

"Denzil, was Cuthbert Mackenzie with the Indians?" she asked.

"Yes," I admitted.

"We have not seen the last of him!" she cried. "He will come back."

"I only wish he would," I replied. "But don't be alarmed. You are quite safe. We shall soon be at the fort."

"The fort!" she murmured. "Then we are near it?"

"Very near," said I. "It will be a couple of hours' tramp, and then——"

I was interrupted by a shout from Gummidge and Baptiste. Hearty cheers answered them, and when I looked around I saw four men, with a big canoe on their shoulders, coming up the shore at a trot. And the foremost of them was the factor of Fort Royal.

Flora divined the truth instantly, and all her self-control could not prevent an agitated heaving of her bosom and a sudden pallor of the cheeks.

"Oh, Denzil, is it——" she began.

"Yes; it is Griffith Hawke," I broke in, savagely.

"Be brave!" she whispered. "Our paths lie apart—do not make it harder for me."

Our eyes met in a look that spoke volumes, and then there was a sudden uproar as the factor and his companions joined our party. I heard my name called and soon Griffith Hawke's hand was locked in mine and he was pouring out a torrent of eager words.

"And is this Miss Hatherton, my boy?" he asked suddenly.

I introduced him briefly and he made her a low and respectful bow. What he said to Flora or how she greeted him I do not know. But as I turned on my heel I stole a glance at the girl and I saw that she was struggling hard to keep her composure. The sun was shining brightly but the world looked dark and black to my eyes.

As soon as the excitement of the meeting was over Gummidge and I gave the factor a coherent story of our adventures; and the narrative brought a grave and troubled expression to his face.

"I will speak of these matters later," he said. "The first thing is to get back to the fort. The wounded voyageur needs immediate attention. My canoe is a large one and will hold us all."

"But where were you bound?" I asked. "To Fort York? You sent word that you were not coming."

"Yes; but affairs grew more quiet," Hawke replied. "and I concluded that I could be spared for a week or two. I was on my way to meet you, Denzil, and it is fortunate that we did not miss each other."

A few moments later we were all tucked into the canoe. Moralle was still unconscious and the paddles of the voyageurs swept us down the foaming current of the Churchill river. It was shortly after noon when on turning a bend we saw below us the towers and palisades, the waving flag of the Hudson Bay Company's post of Fort Royal. Since I had last seen it months before what a change had come into my life! It was a sad and bitter home-coming for me.

So our journey through the wilderness ended and now there was a lull before the threatened storm broke in all its fury—before the curtain rose on new scenes of excitement and adventure. I will pass briefly on to the things that followed soon after our arrival at the fort, the events that far surpassed in tragedy and bloodshed, in sorrow and suffering, all that had happened previously; but first I must give the reader a peep at a northern Hudson Bay Company's post as it was in those remote days—as it exists at the present time with but few changes.

Fort Royal was a fair type of them all though it was much smaller than some. It was built mostly of heavy timbers and stood in a little clearing close to the river. The stockade was about six feet high, and had two corner towers for look-out purposes. Inside, arranged like the letter L, were the various buildings—the factor's house, those of the laborers, mechanics, hunters and other employees; a log hut for the clerks; the storehouses where were kept the furs, skins and pelts; and the Indian trading-house where the bartering was done. Some smaller buildings—the ice-house, the powder-house and a sort of stable for the canoes—completed the number.

Nearly every man had a little bedroom meagerly furnished with pictures from old illustrated papers adorning the walls. The living-room where they sat at night or on off days yawning, smoking and drinking was a great hall. A big table in the center was strewn with pipes and tobacco, books and writing materials; on the walls hung muskets and fishing tackle. All the houses had double doors and windows; and in the

winter tremendous stoves were kept burning. The food varied according to the season ranging from pemmican and moose-muffle—which is the nose of the moose—to venison and beaver, many kinds of fowl, and fresh and salted fish.

A word as to the Indian trading-house. It was divided into two rooms, the inner and larger one containing the stores—blankets, scalping-knives, flints, twine, beads, needles, guns, powder and shot and other things too numerous to mention. To the outer room the Indians entered and through a square iron-barred hole they passed their furs and pelts, receiving in exchange little wooden castors, with which they purchased whatever they wanted.

Fort Royal, as I have said, was not so large as some. It held at this time about forty men, all trusty, good-hearted fellows. It was regarded as an impregnable post; but little did any of us dream how soon our flag would be lowered amid scenes of flame and shot, of carnage and panic.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



A YOUNG BREADWINNER;

OR,

GUY HAMMERSLEY'S TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

The Story of a Brave Boy's Struggle for Fame in the Great Metropolis.

By MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

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CHAPTER XXX.

A MATTER OF DATES.

HE table was set out most sumptuously, so far as the service was concerned. A table cloth of elaborate pattern, with embroidered edges, and napkins to match; a beautiful épergne in the center, flanked on either side by cut glass fruit dishes of unique design. A silver butter dish was at each place, while an imposing coffee urn, most chastely wrought, stood at one end.

There was an oyster plate at each cover, but instead of oysters or clams, these contained dates. In fact, dates were the only article of food visible.

Dates were piled high in each of the fruit dishes, overflowed from the épergne, and reposed, one on each of the butter plates.

"Pray be seated," said the major, waving his hand to a place on his right for Mrs. Westmore, one on his left for Amy, while he motioned to Guy to take the other end of the table. "I trust you are all fond of dates. They are a passion with me, you know. There are my sons, John and Mark, both named for their uncles, and here, some five years since, I discovered that John was born on St. John's Day, and Mark on St. Marks' Day. And now do you wonder that I am interested in dates? Help yourselves; there are plenty more in the pantry."

"Mad as a March hare," said Guy to himself, glancing out of the broad windows in search of assistance, as he helped himself to dates with an oyster fork.

Amy was too frightened to eat. Observing this, Major Warburton frowned and said meaningfully:

"I trust, my dear young lady, you are not going to neglect my favorites."

On finding herself thus addressed, the poor girl's cheek paled and Guy feared that she was going to faint. This would have been most unfortunate, as the excitement which it would naturally induce would be very apt to cause the old gentleman to become more than merely peculiar.

Something must be done at once to avert such a catastrophe. But what? Guy glanced about the room wildly, while Amy, with the major's suggestion reinforced by a meaning look from her mother, was making an heroic effort to carry a date to her mouth.

If it were only possible to lure the old man into some strong room and confine him there! During their recent inspection of the mansion they should have seen such a place, if one existed, and suddenly Guy recollects where it was. The china closet!

This was situated in the passage-way leading from the hall to the dining-room and was lighted, as Guy had remarked at the time, by a high, narrow window, scarcely six inches wide, and which, viewed from the exterior, was one of the features that contributed to give the house its castle-like aspect. The door of stout oak was a sliding one, with the key on the outside, as Guy remembered by reason of Mrs. Westmore having caught her dress in it as she passed.

"If I can only get him into that closet by some hook or crook," thought the boy, "we can shut him up there and go for help."

But what pretext could be found for getting the host up from the dinner-table and into the china closet?

"If I can only lure him there by some stratagem," Guy told himself.

He had just eaten his last date, which left him free to admire the entire design of the oyster plate if he so chose. But he was far too preoccupied to give it more than a passing glance. And yet this one glance furnished him with an inspiration.

"Oh, Major Warburton," he suddenly broke forth, "you say you are so fond of coincidences in dates. I wonder if I have not discovered another for you."

"Really, what is it? Most extraordinary, I am sure," and the major abandoned his attempt to make Amy eat, and turned to his vis-a-vis with eager interest in face and voice.

"Why, these oyster plates," rejoined Guy, hoping that the Westmores would understand that he had a special plan in view. "They are the handsomest I have ever seen, and I was just wondering whether the set was complete. I suppose there are twelve of them, and

this is the twelfth of the month. But servants are so careless, it is possible some of them may have been broken."

It was a lame expedient, Guy knew. Only a man crazy on one theme could by any possibility be taken in by it. In the greatest suspense he awaited the result.

"That's so," exclaimed the major, after an instant's reflection. "It is the twelfth of the month, and I know we had a dozen of those oyster plates. But I heard a crash in the pantry only yesterday, and it is barely possible one of these dishes was in it."

"Had you not better see at once?" suggested Guy, boldly. "These coincidences in dates are very important to us," he added under his breath.

"Well, if the ladies will excuse me for a moment, I believe I will," rejoined the major, after wriggling uneasily in his seat. "I will be right back."

He rose and stepped, in his quick, nervous fashion, across the hard-wood floor. The china closet was just within the hallway and as soon as he had disappeared within it, "Let us fly," gasped Mrs. Westmore, half rising from her chair.

Guy shook his head, laid his finger across his lips, and then rising, stole on tiptoe toward the hallway. He heard the rattle of crockery just as he reached it, then seizing the door knob at his left, he suddenly ran it forward and turned the key in the lock inside of half a minute.

Amy gave a faint scream, and Mrs. Westmore got up and hurried to her side. Guy only waited long enough to make sure that the door was securely locked, and then came back into the dining-room.

Before he could say a word a series of thunderous blows was rained upon the oak portal of the china closet and an instant later a crash of crockery was heard.

"Oh, this is terrible," groaned Mrs. Westmore, for Amy had fainted, and lay back in the great carved chair, as if in death.

Guy hastily brought some water, and between them they soon brought the girl to, but when she heard the noise the major was still making in the china closet, she showed strong symptoms of going off into another collapse.

"We must get her into some other part of the house," said Guy.

"But why not leave at once?" returned the mother. "If as you say he cannot get out of that pantry, there is nothing now to hinder us from making our escape."

"I am afraid there is," was the reply. "You remember we discovered all the windows locked with some patent fastening, and I am sure that stone area-way runs all around the house. But if we go upstairs again I think your daughter can be made more comfortable. It cannot be very long now before some one comes."

So, one on either side of the terrified girl, they conducted her up the stairs to the pleasant room where they had first been made prisoners.

"Now, if you will remain here," said Guy, "I will go down and see if there is any possible way of getting out. You need not be alarmed to stay alone. I am sure the old gentleman cannot make his escape."

"Go," said Mrs. Westmore; "we will stay here and watch for any chance passer-by."

He remained on that floor long enough, however, to satisfy himself of one thing: that the major had been shut in a room specially reserved for him and had forced his way out. Pulling aside a portiere at the end of this upper hallway, Guy beheld the solution of the mystery, for a mystery he certainly held it to be that a man so far gone in dementia as Major Warburton should be left to roam at will in such a mansion.

Behind the curtain just mentioned was a door with a hole in it just below the lock as large as Guy's fist. It had evidently been whittled out with a knife so that the occupant's hand could be thrust through and the bolt slid back. Stepping inside for an instant, Guy beheld an apartment almost luxurious in its furnishings, a suite of them in fact, for parlor and dining-room, chamber and bath, opened out of one another. But he had no time to make a close inspection. He must see if there was not some means of leaving the house which contained such a fearful skeleton in its closet.

Retracing his steps, he descended the main stairway, and was almost deafened by the shouts and blows

which the old gentleman was keeping up in the china closet.

"If he should get out now I'm afraid he would kill us," Guy told himself with a shudder he could not repress.

And yet he felt that he had done the right thing in confining him. But what if he had that knife with him still?

"I had better inspect the china closet door," reflected Guy.

He did so and found that, so far as the exterior, at any rate, was concerned, it was just as he had left it. Paying no heed to the cries that came from within, he crossed the passage-way to the butler's pantry, where he found a stairway leading to the basement. He knew the outside doors were locked, and he was debating with himself whether he would be justified in breaking his way out through a window, when he heard footsteps on the porch overhead.

He started to hurry back to meet the newcomers, but could not at once recall by which door he had entered the large kitchen in which he now found himself. He opened two only to find that they led, the one to the cellar, the other to the laundry, and had just hurriedly thrown back a third when a heavy hand gripped him by the shoulder and a voice of strong German accent exclaimed in his ear: "Ha, I-haf you now. Here, Carl, help me wid the young rascal. Augusta, Augusta, run into the laundry and bring a clothes line till we bind him."

Meanwhile Guy was struggling not only to free himself bodily from the firm grip in which he was held, but to exculpate himself morally from whatever charge should be brought against him. The nature of this he could easily guess. He had been found in the basement of a house that was supposed to be locked up, and had been taken for a thief. However, he had no fear but that he could easily explain matters. Besides, there were Mrs. Westmore and her daughter to bear witness to his story.

But up to the present moment he had gained not the slightest headway in this direction. With two men ready to place their hands over his mouth as soon as he started to open it, there was not much encouragement to talk. Finding himself powerless to contend against both, he presently ceased to struggle, resolved to wait till their choler, valor or whatever it was, had cooled a little, when he would, in all the quietness of offended dignity, convince them of the serious error they had committed.

Suddenly the unknown "Augusta" announced her return with the clothes line by calling in a loud whisper "Here's a rope, Carl."

Guy started. Where had he heard that voice before? He was so absorbed, trying to remember, hoping that he should find a friend, that he made no resistance when his two captors hustled him out of the dark closet into the center of the kitchen. Here there was a three-sided recognition, for, as soon as he caught sight of her face, Guy saw that "Augusta" was none other than Mrs. Traubmann, the wife of the Greenwich street shoe dealer, while the latter himself was one of the two men who were industriously winding him up in the clothes line.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FRESH FOES.

Mrs. Traubmann gave a scream, and began to jabber away to her husband in German. The latter had already started back with the exclamation: "That thief of a clerk!"

"It's all up with me now," sighed poor Guy. "Mr. Inwood has evidently never taken pains to clear my character at the shoe store. My sole reliance now is the Westmores."

After a great deal of talk in their native tongue, and when Guy had been trussed up like a turkey and tied to the door knob, he found an opportunity to get in a word.

"Mr. Traubmann," he began.

But he got no further.

"Dere, vat I tell you, Max?" broke in the shoe dealer. "You see he know me, and gif himself away. Ach, he must be a bad one."

"Go up to the second floor and ask two ladies you will find there if I am not telling the truth when I

say that I came here with them from Kenworthy & Clarke to show them the house."

By a persistent effort Guy managed to hold the floor long enough to get all this out, and he could see, from the expression on the face of the man called Max (who was evidently Major Warburton's keeper) at the mention of the real estate agents' names, that he had produced an impression.

"Go and see if you can find the ladies, Augusta," he said.

But Mr. Traubmann interposed with: "Don't waste your time, Augusta. Dot is only a story of dis young man's. You know vat he is."

Guy suddenly bethought him of that note Mr. Inwood had scribbled for him. If he could show that to the shoe dealer it would be sufficient to rehabilitate his character. He was not sure whether he had it about him or not, and, bound as he was, he could not make an examination to find out.

As may be imagined, he was by this time pretty wrothy.

"You are insulting not only me but my employers," he cried, "besides compelling me to leave the two ladies whom I accompanied here to wonder at my absence."

"But why did you try to rush into dat pantry and hide when you heard us coming?" Max wanted to know.

"I became confused with all the doors about here and lost my way," replied Guy. "I was trying to hurry up and meet you."

"But vat business had you down here any vay?" put in Mr. Traubmann.

At this instant a crash of chinaware sounded directly overhead. The major had remained quiet for the past few minutes, or else there had been so much noise in the basement that Guy had failed to hear other sounds.

"Himmel!" cried Max, making for the stairs. "De major must have got out."

"What will he say when he finds him locked up in the china closet?" Guy asked himself.

He had the key in his pocket, he recollects, with a sense of satisfaction. The liberty to get this would permit him to search for that scrap of paper from Mr. Inwood.

It seemed that Max had not been gone half a minute before he was back again, leaping down the stairs two steps at a time, and almost foaming at the mouth with rage.

"Did you lock Major Warburton up?" he demanded of Guy, rushing fiercely up in front of the prisoner.

"Certainly I did," answered the latter boldly. "I am sure he is not a safe person to be allowed at large."

"But he wasn't at large. He was locked up in his own apartment, and you must have let him out."

Guy could see that a good share of the anger manifested by the German was due to the fact that he felt that he was himself guilty of gross negligence in having left his charge alone. We are always more severe on others when we feel that we ourselves have been derelict in duty.

"What would I want to let a crazy man out for?" returned Guy. "I tell you he was out when I came for in, and I was obliged to lure him into that closet for fear he might do some deed of violence. Did you see the ladies when you were upstairs just now?" he added suddenly.

"No, and I don't believe there are any ladies here," returned Max suddenly. "But the first thing I've got to attend to is de major. Vere is de key to dat closet?"

"I've got it in my pocket."

"Hand it over then."

"If you will undo my hands so that I can get at it, I shall be most happy to do so."

"Tell me which pocket it's in and I'll get it," said the wary Max.

"Here," and Guy nodded his head toward his right thigh. Then he added: "I wish at the same time, you'd take my card case out of my breast pocket. I think you'll find a paper there that will convince Mr. Traubmann that Mr. Inwood had reason to change his opinion of me."

"I'll find that, while you get de key," volunteered the shoe dealer, eagerly launching himself on the prisoner. "Augusta" meantime had disappeared.

Max soon had the key and was off upstairs to free the major and prevent further destruction of the War-

barton crockery, and Mr. Traubmann was presently going through the contents of Guy's pocketbook.

But even as he began to finger the cards and memoranda of various sorts, the owner was stricken by the recollection that he had stuffed the paper into the pocket of another coat which was now hanging in the closet at home.

"Never mind," he said. "you won't find it."

"Aha, I thought so," muttered Traubmann, and at the same instant "Augusta" returned with the announcement: "Dere's no ladies here. I been de house all over."

No ladies there! Guy could not understand it. What had become of Mrs. Westmore and Amy? Without them he had no one to substantiate his claim that he had entered the Warburton house on legitimate business. He had already shown the Kenworthy & Clarke permit, but Mr. Traubmann had easily persuaded Max that this went for nothing, as any one expressing a desire to see the house could obtain one.

But to the fact of his own predicament Guy gave at present but little heed. His mind was wholly occupied with the problem of the whereabouts of the two ladies. Could any evil have befallen them? Possibly Major Warburton might have broken his way out and—

Guy dared not follow this thought, but turned anxiously to Mr. Traubmann with the question:

"Do you suppose that madman can have got away from his keeper, the fellow you call Max?"

At the suggestion of such a possibility, both the shoe dealer and his spouse turned pale, and without vouchsafing a reply beat a precipitate retreat upstairs.

Guy tugged at his bonds in the effort to follow them, but he could not free himself and was fain to wait with all the patience he could muster for the return of Max.

The minutes passed and no one came. All was quiet above.

"They must have forgotten me," was Guy's conclusion when the kitchen clock had ticked off an hour of this dreary waiting. "I'm going to see what effect a few calls from a healthy pair of lungs will produce."

Thereupon the prisoner in the kitchen set up a series of yells, learned at Fairlock, that might have led a passer-by to infer that the lunatic of the mansion was confined in the basement.

A feminine shriek, emitted from somewhere close at hand, apprised Guy that some one, at any rate, had heard him, and three minutes later Max rushed in, followed rather timorously by a string of maid servants.

"What do you mean by raising such a row?" demanded the major's keeper sternly, hastily inspecting Guy's bonds, to make sure that there was no danger of his breaking loose.

"What do you mean by keeping me tied up here?" retorted Guy with spirit. "I've borne the thing weekly long enough. It's a disgrace. Mr. Kenworthy will let your employer know of the affair."

"Dat for your Mr. Kenworthy!" exclaimed Max, with a snap of the finger. "You can do all your talking to Mr. Scriber, de magistrate. Here's de constable now."

Matters were indeed growing serious for poor Guy. Was it possible that he must spend a night in jail till some one could come up from the office and identify him? Where could Mrs. Westmore be?

"Well, where's the burglar?"

This from a short, thick-set man, who had just descended the stairs, clinking a pair of handcuffs suggestively.

Guy winced at sight of the latter. This was monstrous that he should be subjected to such indignities. Was Mr. Traubmann responsible for it all, he wondered?

Meantime Max had laid his hand on Guy's shoulder as indicating "the burglar," and the constable advanced with handcuffs open, when a new actor appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EXPLANATIONS AND A CALL.

The newcomer was none other than Mrs. Westmore.

"Oh, Mr. Hammersley—Guy!" she gasped, at sight of the boy lashed about with the clothes line, "What does this mean?"

Max started when he heard the familiar way in which this refined looking lady addressed the captive.

"It means," replied Guy, "that I am accused of entering this house with burglarous intent. You can tell them, Mrs. Westmore, to the contrary."

"Certainly I can. Release him instantly," and the lady spoke in such a tone of authority that Max never waited to put any questions, but proceeded to unbind Guy forthwith.

The poor fellow's limbs were quite stiff from his hour's confinement, and he was forced to sink into a chair for a moment after he was freed.

"It is shameful," declared Mrs. Westmore; then a sudden light breaking in upon her, "Why, it is my fault partly, I do believe," she added hastily. "If I had been here, to put in my evidence before, you might have been spared all this. But Amy, as soon as she saw people downstairs, begged me to flee with her. We thought we should find you down here, but saw no one. The door was open though, and poor Amy was so terrified and eager to be out of the house, and off the place that I was obliged to go with her, without waiting to find out where you were. I am so sorry."

"Oh, it's all right," returned Guy, rising. "Do you think we shall have time to catch the train we wanted?"

"Yes, the carriage is at the door, and Amy is waiting at the station."

As Guy turned to follow Mrs. Westmore upstairs, Max stepped up to him, and in very humble tones begged that he would not report the morning's proceedings. But Guy would not promise. He felt that a season of fear and trembling would be a good thing for the delinquent.

"Why do you suppose they permitted us to go to the house that contained such a skeleton in its closet?" said Mrs. Westmore, as they drove back to the village.

"We knew nothing about it," returned Guy, speaking for Kenworthy & Clarke. "And evidently our driver did not. I suppose the Warburtons did not want to acknowledge that the old gentleman was a fit subject for the asylum, so allowed him to remain in that room, as they thought, properly guarded. But this wedding evidently tempted the whole force of servants to take an hour off, and in that time the mischief was done."

Amy was still in a highly excited state, so nothing was said to her about the sequel to the morning's adventure. In fact, during the journey back to town no reference whatever was made to the Warburton place.

But just as they parted at the Forty-Second street station, Mrs. Westmore drew Guy aside and said in a hurried undertone: "We owe the demented old major one thing, at any rate: the discovery of a relative. Ridley will be around to see you immediately, and I want you to consider our house your house, and remember I am no longer Mrs. Westmore, but your 'Cousin Anna.'"

Guy made up his mind that he would say nothing at home, for the present, at least, about his adventure in the country. Indeed, there was so much excitement over Harold's success that there was small opportunity to introduce a new theme.

The result of the boy's first rehearsal was satisfactory in the extreme, and Mr. English predicted a brilliant "first night." He himself accompanied Guy and Harold to Harlem for a personal interview with Mrs. Hammersley.

"May I use the boy's own name on the bills?" he asked in the course of the talk. "It is an eminently fitting one for such a purpose."

After a little hesitation, Mrs. Hammersley gave her

consent to this, and the manager hurried off to send the order to the lithographer.

Ward began calling Harold, "Your Royal Highness" forthwith, and wanted to know if the free list at the Criterion was to be "absolutely suspended" during the engagement.

"And if I were you, Harry," he added, "I'd send a special dispatch to Mrs. Burnett, asking if she won't substitute a cat for a dog in the second act. Then you could have Emperor's name starred with yours."

But the boy was so happy over his prospects that he did not in the least mind a little teasing. He gave the family a detailed account of his day's experiences at the theater, where everybody had been extremely kind to him, and not a few funny incidents had happened during the rehearsal.

The next morning's papers contained a paragraph announcing a grand production of "Fauntleroy" at the Criterion "with Master Glenn, a boy of unusual talent, and one who looks the part to perfection."

Again Guy left him at the theater on his way to the office, for there was still a good deal of work to be done in order that all should move smoothly on Monday.

Our hero was just putting away his things that afternoon, preparatory to calling for the boy, when a young fellow entered whom he at once recognized as Ridley Westmore.

"Is Mr. Guy Hammersley in?" he inquired.

"That is my name," rejoined Guy.

"What you?" exclaimed the other impulsively, and Guy knew that he too remembered those two contrasted meetings on Fifth Avenue.

"Yes, and I can guess that you are Ridley Westmore," he said frankly.

"Your cousin, and awfully glad to make your acquaintance, returned the other cordially, extending his hand, quite recovered from his surprise. 'That is,' he added, 'if you're willing to reckon cousins three or four times removed. I'm not just sure which it is.'

"I'd be glad to know you if you were fifty times removed, or—no, I don't mean literally," he added, as Ridley began to laugh with the thought of the uncomplimentary interpretation that might be put upon the declaration.

This faux pas of Guy's broke all the remaining ice, and he was about to ask Westmore to be seated when he recollects that he himself was due at the theater inside of ten minutes.

"I'll have to keep up this removing dodge," said he, laughing, "by asking if you would mind walking along with me to the Criterion Theater instead of sitting down."

"Certainly I wouldn't; that's on my way up town. Going after tickets, I suppose."

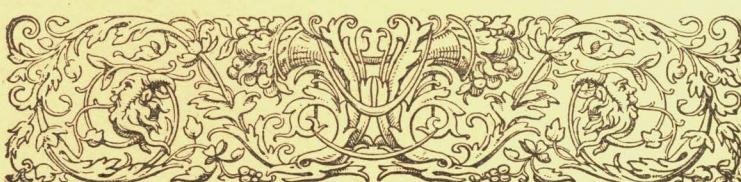
"No, I am going to get a small brother of mine. He's been there all day rehearsing."

"Small boy—Criterion—rehearsing! You don't mean to say your small brother is Harold Glenn, who's announced to open in 'Fauntleroy' next Monday?" and Ridley stopped stockstill in the doorway while he put the question.

"Well, he's my half-brother, and a mighty nice little chap he is, too," rejoined Guy. "Come along and I'll introduce you."

"I am in luck," ejaculated Ridley, as he started off, little imagining the part he was destined to play in the fortunes of the youthful star.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



EDITORIAL CHAT

AND CORRESPONDENCE.

In this number will be found the opening chapters of a serial by that prince of story tellers, Arthur Lee Putnam, whose vivid tales of New York life have won for him so much commendation. We predict for "A Diamond in the Rough" a great success among our readers. While on the subject of new serials it will be well to hint that in No. 34 will be commenced one from the pen of an author whose name is famed throughout the world. Details will be published shortly.

* * *

The prize story in the Amateur Short Story contest is published this week. Mr. Don C. Wilson, the fortunate winner, is well-known in the 'dom as the editor and publisher of "Storyettes," one of the brightest amateur papers in the United States.

* * *

Peculiarly timely is the serial, "The Treasure of Isora," by Brooks McCormick, commenced week before last. The story is founded on fact, and Tiburon Island, on which the greater part of the action takes place, is now exciting the attention of the entire civilized world. The following information will prove of interest to our readers:

* * *

The island of Tiburon is one of the largest and most picturesque in the Gulf of California, in Mexico, and is peopled by a most remarkable tribe of Indians, who are noted for their large size and extraordinary activity on land and water. Those who have witnessed their aquatic sports at a respectful distance declare that many of them can actually walk, or rather run, on the water, with no other assistance than broad raw-hide shoes. They are expert fishermen and huntsmen, having rigid ideas as to the maintenance of game preserves on their island and limiting the killing of game under severe penalties.

* * *

They destroy in infancy all children who are malformed or appear to be lacking in intelligence. In this way the standard of physical and mental condition in both sexes is kept high. It is currently believed that at one time the native women were exterminated to make room for a whiter and superior race of women. The nucleus of this race of higher women was formed from captives made at various times, extending over a series of years, on land and water. They have no schools, but each home has a system of physical training. The natives guard their shores day and night, and no man is allowed to penetrate the island, even if he should make a landing. It is said that no epidemics have ever prevailed on the island, and disease is scarcely known among this extraordinary people, so that the men and women are magnificent in their physical endowment. No man or woman is allowed to live beyond the age of seventy, no matter how well preserved in body and mind. By careful selection a large percentage of the women have a transparent, peachy complexion and deep auburn hair.

* * *

Recently United States Consul, Hugh Long, at Nogales, Mexico, has sent to the State Department the particulars of the murder of a party of Americans

headed by Captain Porter, by the Seris Indians on Tiburon Island in the Gulf of California. According to the statement made to the Mexican customs officials by Martin Mendez, master of the sloop Otila, Captain Porter sailed from San Diego, Cal., with his companions in a small boat, to engage in collecting shells. They left the port of Guaymas on August 9, under special permission from the Mexican Government to explore the shores and islands of the Gulf.

* * *

A. J. S.—Assistant surgeons in the U. S. Army are appointed by the President to fill existing vacancies. Candidates must undergo a strict physical examination, and examination oral and written in both the medical science and general educational subjects. Full particulars can be obtained by writing to the Surgeon General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

* * *

W. H. B., N. B., Mass.—1. The possession of a thorough common school education is necessary to a candidate trying to pass the examinations at either West Point or Annapolis. The examinations, both physical and mental, are extremely severe. 2. Your writing and spelling are poor.

* * *

F. A. S., Providence, R. I.—1. Nepaul or Nipal, as it is called by its inhabitants, is a small independent state situated on the northeast frontier of Hindustan, India. Its population is estimated by the natives at about 5,000,000. 2. See an encyclopedia for further information.

* * *

R. D., Long Branch, N. J.—If you desire employment in the company mentioned it will be necessary for you to write a formal application, stating age, education, previous business experience and references, and forward it to the superintendent.

* * *

H. M., Jr.—Several of the western states and territories offer good facilities for cattle raising. The amount of money necessary to start a ranch depends entirely on the size of the ranch and existing circumstances.

* * *

W. F. N., Jr., St. Louis, Mo.—Badly decayed teeth would prevent you passing an examination for the position of apprentice in the navy. Your education as indicated by your letter should be sufficient.

* * *

A Constant Reader, Newark, N. J.—Such information can only be obtained through a lawyer making a specialty of estates. 2. Gravesend, England, is thirty miles below London on the Thames.

* * *

J. C. F., Parkersburg, W. Va.—1. The information requested would take up too much space. Consult a book on electricity.

* * *

C. E. T., Ogden, Utah—The stamp department has been discontinued.

* * *

A. H. Gordan, Fulton, Ky.—No.

Arthur Sevall

AMATEUR JOURNALISM

NEWS NOTES
OF INTEREST TO THE
YOUNG PUBLISHERS
AND AUTHORS
OF AMERICA



AMATEUR SHORT STORY CONTEST.

THE PRIZE STORY.

The selection of the best amateur story from among the great number submitted in this contest has proved a very difficult task indeed. Stories were received from the brightest members of the 'dom, and it was found necessary to read them several times before a decision could be reached. At last, after due deliberation, the judges decided to award the prize to Mr. Don C. Wilson, editor and publisher of "The Storyette," whose winning story appears below. Special mention must be made of the stories submitted by Frank L. Campbell, Chas. W. Heins, Wm. H. Greenfield, Manfred J. Berliner, J. Clarke Farran, H. M. Konwiser, Winn Davidson, J. Ira Thomas, William Showve, Frank Oppenheimer, Eugene De Camp, Miss Ellen Sayler, Wm. J. S. Dineen, Jr., G. W. Helbling, Roy Heartz, Miss Sophie Hammond and Richard L. Bigelow.

Steele Stirling's Start in Life.

BY DON C. WILSON.

From its long sweep over the unbroken prairie a stronger blast of wind shook the little depot at the wayside station and blew the fine, hail-like snow in gusts and eddies about the corners of the frail building, and hurled it fiercely in clouds across the desolate prairie. The cold breath of the north played a dismal tune on the vibrating telegraph wires, and nearly extinguished the flickering light in the signal-lamp suspended from a beam in front of the depot.

Nothing but the lights in the station and the gaunt, spectral telegraph poles broke the intense monotony of the scene. All was desolate, dreary and bitterly cold; and the huddled figure on the depot platform, leaning against the southern wall which but partially sheltered him from the fury and violence of the storm, shivered and drew his poor jacket tightly around him as his eyes roamed the unbroken expanse of the plains.

The boy, for he could not have been more than seventeen, was stalwart and muscular, his facial features regular, and his shoulders broad and powerfully knit.

This youth was Steele Stirling.

He was an orphan, his parents having been dead thirteen years. An irascible, intemperate and, withal, a brutal man by the name of Burleigh had adopted him, not from any humane feeling, but for mercenary purposes.

Though extremely poor and humble, Steele entertained a proper respect for himself and his honor, and possessed an independent, determined spirit. This was, strictly speaking, the cause of his homelessness; for, in a quarrel with his adopted father, his independence had shown itself to an alarming extent, and had so far carried him away as to cause him to give old Burleigh a sound thrashing. Wrought to terrible rage, the man cast him out in the dead of winter, penniless and meanly clad.

Though dismayed, Steele did not betray his feelings; but immediately set out for the lonely little way sta-

tion with the resolution to leave his prairie home and take to the activity and animation of the city.

And in this deplorable condition we find him at the opening of this narrative.

"I'll go to Chicago," he resolved, firmly. "I'm sick and tired of the monotonous life of the prairie, and I want to leave it behind forever. Ah! there she is at last!"

At that moment there came to his ears above the din of the storm, the faint echo of a whistle heralding the approach of the eastward bound train; and a moment later the headlight appeared shining like a star in the distance.

Swiftly, and with a faint rumble, the giant locomotive approached in the very teeth of the gale. The shining rails glistened like ribbons of silver as the ghostly glare of the headlight shone on them and penetrated the dim maze of the swirling snow.

With an unearthly shriek, a confused ringing of bells, a hiss of escaping steam and a creaking of "down brakes," the panting steed of iron halted before the little depot.

Steele, unobserved, leaped to the platform on the forward end of the "blind" baggage car and crouched in the shadow.

The railway officials hurriedly transacted their business, the mail-bags were transferred from the baggage-room of the station to the mail-car, and then, with another piercing shriek, the midnight express whirled out into the night.

A few seconds later, Steele, clinging tenaciously to the railing of the platform, fairly gasped for breath. He was, so it seemed to him, simply hurled through space; for the speed of the train was terrific and utterly sickening.

"Gracious!" he gasped "talk about speed! This is a veritable comet!"

His nerves tingled and thrilled with true boyish enjoyment. The speed of the express was marvelous—the coaches seemed to brush the rails, the poles on the side of the track flashed past like fleeting phantoms, twinkling lights in distant farmhouses, barely visible through the haze of the storm, whirled in a circle toward the rear of the train and seemed to follow in its wake.

But when the first warm flush of exertion left his limbs, Steele was awakened to a complete realization of his painful position.

The wind now cut his face mercilessly and the sleet pierced his flesh with the keenness of needles. His finger grew stiff, he shivered involuntarily and his eyes watered as the wind struck them.

Suddenly his eyes lit upon a round, suspicious-looking figure huddled on the heap of coal in the tender before him. Watching it closely, he detected a slight movement. Then to his astonishment the figure rose to an upright position and assumed the shape of a man. A low, hardly audible whistle came to his ears, evidently from the lips of the man before him, and in response to this signal another sprang up from the black coal.

Thoroughly aroused, and filled with a strange sensation of anxiety, Steele arose to his feet to enable him to see them more distinctly.

"Who are they?" he wondered, "and what do they intend to do?"

As though in response to his question, the men sprang toward the cab of the engine just as the fireman opened the roaring furnaces to add fuel to the fire. The bright glare shot through the black atmosphere with blinding suddenness, and revealed to Steele's horrified gaze the two men threatening the engineer with glinting revolvers.

"Stop the train!" ordered one of the men, sternly. "Stop it, I say, or I'll shoot!"

As he spoke they sprang from the tender to the floor of the cab, and shoved the guns directly under the terrified engineer's nose.

"For God's sake, man, don't shoot!" gasped the poor fellow. "I'll stop it!"

At that moment Steele leaped to the top of the tender. Snatching up a heavy coupling pin he threw it with unerring aim at one of the scoundrels. It struck the fellow full in the back of the head, and he dropped like a log. Then with a bound Steele Stirling was at the other's side.

The fireman, recovering from his amazement, leaped to his aid. A desperate struggle ensued, the man fighting like a demon, but overpowering numbers finally conquered, and presently both robbers were lying bound hand and foot on the floor of the cab.

During this exciting scene the engineer kept at his post of duty, controlling the engine admirably well.

"Now!" cried Steele, briskly; "keep her going Mr. Engineer; don't stop for an instant!"

"What's up?" gasped the astounded fireman, who, though rallying quickly to our hero's aid, did not entirely comprehend the situation. "What's all this mean, anyhow?"

"Robbers!" said Steele, swiftly. "These fellows were to order you to stop the train while others, whom we'll meet farther ahead, are to hold up the passengers and loot the express car."

Steele was not certain of this, but he was quick to arrive at conclusions and reasoned it out, correctly supposing that other robbers than those whom they had captured were in the plot to "hold up" the midnight express.

The fireman was astounded.

"Great Heavens!" he gasped, "how'd you find out?"

For an answer, Steele suddenly fell to the floor, pulling the fireman with him.

"Lay low!" he ordered.

His action was extremely timely; for at that moment a volley of rifle shots greeted the train's approach, and yells of baffled rage rolled from the throats of a squad of mounted men stationed on either side of the track.

Windows were shattered, casings splintered, and train equipages scratched by hissing bullets.

All this happened in the space of several seconds; and the train rolled past the outlaws with a tremendous throb and rattle.

"May Heaven bless you!" cried the engineer, leaving his post for a moment to grasp Steele's hand. "You've saved our lives and prevented a great robbery."

Now that the danger was past, Steele marveled at his own bravery and quick actions.

Presently a few lights in the next station, Ridgefield, appeared, and a moment later the train drew up before the depot.

Though still raging fiercely, the storm had abated somewhat; the wind was not so violent, but the snow descended in larger and more numerous flakes, and enshrouded the depot and lights in a ghostly mantel.

Just as the train stopped, the passengers, who had been thrown into a panic of terror by the shots of the outlaws, rushed pell mell from the train and demanded an explanation of the affair.

The engineer related all that had occurred to an old gentleman with grey hair and a decidedly official air, and Steele, by the gentleman's instructions, was ushered into a private car.

Once seated in the luxurious apartments of the coach, our hero was urged to tell the old gentleman of his history; and he did so.

The man was Archibald Fleming, the president of the road, as Steele discovered.

The outcome of the affair was that Steele Stirling was adopted, or rather chosen, as the old gentleman's ward, and in due time received a thorough education, and ultimately wae taken in as a partner of Archioald Fleming in the railroad business.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

ALL THE WORLD OVER.

Snakes That Like Thunder.

One of the wonders of the bare sandy plains of New Mexico is the thunder snakes. They are by no means common, yet they are often encountered by prairie travelers, especially before and after thunder storms. Flashes of lightning and claps of thunder, which are so terrifying to bipeds and quadrupeds, seem to have the greatest charm and delight for these members of the serpent family. Whenever a thunder storm comes up they have a regular picnic. They come crawling out of holes, from behind rocks and rotten stumps and enjoy the fun while it lasts. Their nature is quarrelsome, their character fierce, and they are aggressive in a high degree although their markings are very beautiful. They are not poisonous, however; their bark is worse than their bite.

Grooming a Locomotive.

George Ethelbert Walsh, in an article entitled "Running the Fast Express," says: "The engineer comes down to his post of duty nearly an hour before his train is scheduled to leave. All night long in the roundhouse the engine has been carefully watched; a wiper has spent the whole night rubbing down the panting, snorting iron horse until every rod and cylinder shines like gold or silver; the banked fire has been kept going, so that a little steam has been always in the boxes, and before he left at night the fireman put everything in perfect order inside the cab.

The fireman appears first in the morning and inspects the work of the roundhouse men, and if any part is not satisfactory he makes it so. The engineer makes his inspection after the fireman and thoroughly and carefully examines every part. All the bearings are then oiled, and the oil cups are filled with oil. Next the engine is run out of the roundhouse and tested. Fifteen minutes before the time to start the engine is coupled to the train, and the steam and airbrakes are tested.

"No race horse was ever brought to his post better fitted for running the course than is the locomotive of the fast express. In addition to the tests already made, a mechanic goes from wheel to wheel, and upon every one strikes a sharp, resounding blow to ascertain if the wheel and axle are sound. Nuts and bolts are examined. The engineer and fireman are held responsible for the perfect condition of the engine and cars before the start is made."

A Drop of Water.

Water that is now in the ocean and in the river has been many times in the sky. The history of a single drop taken out of a glass of water is really a romantic one. No traveler has ever accomplished such distance in his life. That particle may have reflected the palm trees of coral islands and have caught the sun rays in the arch that spans a cloud clearing away from the valleys of the Cumberland or California.

OUR JOKE DEPARTMENT.

Household Duties.

Mr. Nicefello—"Ah, how de do, my little man! Been helping your sister, I suppose. She told me she would be busy for a little while with some household duties."

Little Man—"Yep. I tried to help, but I wasn't much use."

"I suppose not."

"No. She wanted me to carry some water, but I couldn't carry much at a time, and it takes a lot to get ink out of carpet, specially red ink."

"Red ink?"

"Yes, sis always writes her letters to Mr. Warmheart in red ink. He says it reminds him of the way she blushes when he kisses her."

A Bad Boy.

Mother—"Why don't you play with that little Peter-kin boy any more?"

Small Son—"Cause he swore."

"Horrors! Did he?"

"Yes'm. He swore I stole his knife, and teacher made me give it back, and licked me besides."

Jimmy—"Ain't yer glad school's begun?"

Billy—"Naw. Vacation suits me. Look at the fun we had playin' ball, an' fishin', an' everything."

Jimmy—"Yes; but just think how much more fun we'll have a-playin' hookey."

Some years ago a clergyman visiting a ragged school in London asked a class of bright, mischievous urchins, all of whom had been gathered from the streets, "How many bad boys does it take to make a good one?"

A little fellow immediately replied, "One, sir, if you treat him well."

The Omaha Bee tells of a clergyman who was catechizing a Sunday school, and, after informing the children that the pastor of a church is its shepherd, while the members are the sheep, he asked: "What does the shepherd do for the sheep?" To the amusement of those present a small boy in the front row piped out, "Shear them!"

"Now, dear," said mamma to little Carrie, who had just received a box of sweetmeats, "you must ask one of your little friends in to share your candy."

"Well," replied the little lady, after a few moments' thought, "I—I guess I'll invite Fannie, 'cause candy makes her teeths ache an' she can't eat much."

"What can you tell me about Esau?" asked the pedagogue of his most promising pupil in the beginners' class.

"Esau," replied the young hopeful, with the glib alacrity of one who feels himself for once on safe ground; "Esau was the fellow what wrote a book of fables and sold the copyright for a bottle of potash."

"I'm awful glad, mamma, that I've begun to go to school."

"Why, dear?"

"Because we have a holiday every Saturday."

A little three-year-old miss wandered over to the window during family prayers one snowy morning and nearly knocked the inspiration out of the supplicants by exclaiming: "Oh, mamma! Tome an' look. It's wainin' poptron."

"Ma," said a little girl, "if you'll let me buy some candy I'll be good."

"My child," solemnly responded the mother, "you should not be good for pay; you should be good for nothing."

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